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*Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the impact of singing on
maternal wellbeing and parent-infant relationship*

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PROJECT PROPOSAL

THE CONTEXT

After training in Musical Theatre and working professionally for several years, I have decided to build my own practice as a freelancer practitioner working in the Singing for Health field and begin a new chapter by attending this Master course at Voice Study Centre. I have always been captivated by the benefits that singing has on our well-being, and I am determined to investigate it further. My interest in understanding how powerful and meaningful singing may be as a support to our mental health led me to explore diverse areas such as singing as a support for people affected by Dementia and Alzheimer's (Govetto, 2021) and the impact that singing may have on professional singers (Govetto, 2022); my attention was drawn to singing as a support for mothers affected by Post Natal depression, and I would like to develop my evidence-based practice, offering singing workshops to mothers, to support their well-being and the bond with their baby (Wilson et al., 2002; Beck et al., 2006; Kenny, 2009).

THE JUSTIFICATION

Through research, I have discovered how music and singing may have a beneficial impact on our well-being; they positively affect and elevate our mood, provide relaxation due to deeper breathing, enhance the quality of life, prevent anxiety and depression (Beck et al., 2006; Clift and Hancox, 2011; Daykin et al., 2017). With this research, I would like to investigate the potential benefits of singing, supporting and enhancing mothers' wellbeing and the mother-baby bond. Research has also revealed that mother-infant attunement is correlated to a positive impact on maternal mental health (Rossen, 2016). I consider there to be limited attention to maternal well-being; there is also the need for further research and understanding of the benefits of singing on mothers' mental health and the relationship with their babies (Fancourt and Perkins, 2018; Wulff, 2020). It is hoped that this project will assist in supporting and drawing attention to maternal wellbeing. Following a thorough research, examining and comparing the current situation in the UK and Italy, I have

discovered that there is still little awareness and attention towards mothers' emotional health and regarding the connection between music and singing and mothers' wellbeing (Govetto, 2023). There are few institutions or supporting centres that pay attention to and understand the meaningful role of singing in supporting mothers and their relationship with their babies. Therefore, my aim is to develop an evidence-based practice in Italy to bring knowledge and awareness regarding this broad topic. I aim to build my evidence based practice on Singing for Health and bring to Italy knowledge and awareness regarding the potential support that singing gives to mothers and the bond with their babies (Scope et al., 2013).

THE INTENDED IMPACT

Throughout my project, I aim to gain and consolidate a deeper knowledge and evidence-based understanding of the benefits of singing on mothers' mental health and the bond with their babies. I aim to understand how helpful singing may be as a support for mothers if any distress occurs during the postpartum period. By conducting inclusive singing workshops and analysing the data collected from interviews and research instruments, I aim to highlight the potential positive influence of singing on the mental and emotional health of mothers and the quality of their bond with their infants; this will enable me to fill the gap in the market by building my practice and offer mothers a choice and a chance to reconnect or deepen the bond with their infant. I also hope that my research will have an impact on Italian institutions to recognise singing as a helpful tool to support and enhance mothers' wellbeing and bond with their babies; this might possibly help mothers eliminate the stigma of seeking help and build a supporting community with other mothers. I intend to create workshops and provide mothers with a relaxing and safe space where they feel secure to share experiences and support each other, and most importantly, a place where they feel the protagonists again; this will promote mothers' self-esteem, sense of achievement, relief from concerns related to motherhood and self-confidence in caring for the infant (Jorm et al., 2008; Perkins et al., 2018).

The broader ramifications of this project act as a foundation to build upon with the aim to develop inclusive singing workshops and propose them as a project to the Italian National Health Service; by shedding light on the potential positive effects of singing, my research could encourage the integration of singing workshops into existing support programs for new mothers, potentially leading to improved mental health outcomes for mothers and enhanced parent-infant relationships in various context (Perkins et al., 2018; Warran et al. 2023). I would like to explore further the potential benefits of singing as support for women affected by post-natal depression which may

support not only the current research regarding the impact of singing as an evidence-based intervention, but also on implementing arts interventions in different healthcare settings and sociocultural contexts (Warran et al., 2023).

THE OUTLINED INTENTION

I lean towards relativism since I aim to understand people's experiences which are always individual (Jupp, 2006); however, since I will work with mothers, who may show vulnerability or sensitivity to the topic, I will also be led by the transformative paradigm that has the crucial element of trust (Mertens, 2007). A phenomenological approach would help me understand the reality of an experience since I would like to understand how meaningful the support of singing may be for mothers and their relationship with their babies (Polkinghorne 1983). This approach entails getting a deeper awareness of people's everyday experience of reality (McLeod, 2001; Holloway & Todres, 2003). Moreover, I will also be led by a hermeneutic approach that will help me gather data and be conscious in case of potential bias, which may corrupt the study's validity (Wojnar et al., 2007; McCaffrey et al., 2012).

METHODS:

Using a narrative literature review, I will scrupulously explore the existing studies on the impact of singing on mental health (Boote and Beile, 2005; Randolph, 2009). I will examine and deepen my knowledge of the impact that singing has on mothers' wellbeing and the bond with their babies (July-August 2023). This project will involve 6 to 8 participants who will be mothers, and I will contact them through social media and community groups, targeting groups that attract mothers. To support my research, I will interview professionals who already deliver similar classes and work with mothers and published experts in the field whose research has been focused on the potential support of creative intervention for maternal wellbeing. I will contact them through colleagues and The Voice Study Centre, a pool of published professionals and researchers; they will receive an email with all the details about the project and sign a consent form (August-September).

1. An open ended questionnaire will be used to measure participants' perceptions of their abilities and well-being. I will utilise the " Perceived Maternal Parenting Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (PMP S-E)" (Appendix 6) as a guide; this tool has been designed to measure parenting self-efficacy (Barnes and Adamson-Macedo 2007). I aim to understand how mothers' beliefs regarding their performance of caregiving tasks and their daily routines impact their well-being and relationship with their baby; lastly, I aim to investigate how singing fits into their daily routine and how this practice is perceived by mothers (Douglas et al., 1991; Giallo, 2011).
2. Semi-structured interview 1 will be conducted with 3 to 5 professionals such as nurses, midwives, and other professional researchers, who work directly with mothers to gather information regarding their observations and experiences about mothers' wellbeing, connection with their infants and whether singing is a valuable tool to enhance mothers mental health. This versatile and flexible method will allow participants to share their thoughts and opinions (Galletta, 2012; RWJF, 2008). Open-ended questions will be used as guidance for spontaneous and in depth answers, clearly worded and not leading for the participants (Dearnley, 2005; Turner, 2010). As themes emerge from the interview, further probing questions will be asked to elicit richer data that will be useful to inform the design of the singing workshops, gain deeper insights regarding the topic, identify key themes and patterns, and complement data acquired through other methods (Kallio et al., 2016) (August-Mid September).
3. Semi-structured interview 2 – to understand mothers' perceptions and feelings after the workshops. I will design a semi-structured interview with a template of questions. Questions will relate to the knowledge acquired within the literature review and the workshops. As themes emerge from the interview, further probing questions will be asked to elicit richer data. The interviews will help me assess the workshops' perceived benefits and identify improvement areas. This method will allow participants to share their experiences (Wilson, 2012). Semi-structured interviews offer the flexibility to elaborate on specific aspects that emerge during the interview (Gill, 2008). However, this approach may affect the validity of comparing responses between participants based on predetermined questions; it is essential to consider that the questions should not cause any harm to the participants therefore guiding the participants while adhering to the designated topic may help prevent any ethical dilemmas that may arise from spontaneous follow-up questions (Kallio et al., 2016). The data acquired will be a helpful source for understanding further how meaningful the role of singing may be; it will help identify any potential support needs that mothers may have concerning their wellbeing and the parent-infant relationship (Whiting, 2008). This discussion will empower participants to share their unique feelings and suggestions by attentively listening, leaving space for reflection and beginning the interview with questions that are easy to answer and gradually move on to more sensitive topics, allowing respondents to feel more

comfortable and build a rapport between them and the interviewer (Gill, 2008) (September-October 2023).

The interviews will be conducted online via Zoom, and they will last a maximum of an hour.

However, I expect to fully complete the interview process in two weeks to give myself the time to transcribe and analyse data. All the data gathered will be stored securely on a password-protected USB.

RESEARCH PROJECT PLAN

Tasks	Jul/Aug 2023			Sept/Oct 2023			Nov/Dic 2023			Jen/Feb 2024			March 2024		
Preparation															
Agree on research topic with tutor															
Determine aims, objectives, research question															
Invite experts for interviews															
Write project proposal															
Write questions for interviews with experts															
Invite mothers to workshops															
Send "self-efficacy scale" to mothers															
Research															
Literature review															
Analyse data from experts' interview															

Invite mothers for interviews															
Analyse data from “self-efficacy scale”															
Workshops to take place															
Report															
Write introduction and methodology															
Analyse and code data from interviews															
Write results and findings															
Draft report deadline															
Presentation deadline															

ETHICS CONSIDERATIONS

This research project raises ethical considerations concerning the well-being and privacy of the mother participants. Measures will be taken to obtain participants' informed consent, ensuring their voluntary participation and confidentiality of their personal information by providing each participant with a code safely stored on my laptop (Manti and Licari 2018). To build safe workshops for women, I will prioritize their confidentiality and vulnerability (Gilbert, 2017). As an insider researcher, I acknowledge the potential influence my personal experiences and biases may have on the project. I will maintain objectivity and transparency throughout the research process, engaging in reflexive practices to address any potential bias and uphold the integrity of the study (Amyth & Holian, 2008; Chavez, 2008; Berger, 2015) and since I am deeply involved in the topic, I will have to manage boundaries and engage in self-protection (Figley, 1995; Daykin, 2020). As a researcher, I will give importance to people's ideas through the interviews, and I will engage in active listening, leaving also participants time and space for reflection (Bloom, 1998; Falconer, 2017). I will keep a fieldwork diary to help me analyse and reflect on my work (King and Horrocks, 2010). As a creative researcher, I have an understanding of methods, creative interventions and analysis, but I am not a certified health professional therefore I will not provide medical advice; furthermore, my research may reveal potential benefits of singing on maternal wellbeing, but does not replace professional medical and psychological advice (MacNeill 2021).

I am aware that from the interviews, sensitive topics may emerge; for this reason, I will provide mothers with helpline contacts such as Call 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)—The National Maternal Mental Health Hotline, "Mothers for mothers helpline 0117 9359366", "Mind.org.uk 0300 123 3393".

PERSONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

I anticipate developing valuable research skills throughout this research, including conducting a comprehensive literature review, utilising data collection and analysis methods, and effectively communicating research findings. Additionally, I look forward to deepening my understanding of

the significance of maternal well-being and parent-infant relationships in early childhood development. This project will serve as a platform for personal growth as a researcher and advocate for promoting positive maternal mental health.

PROJECT REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This research project seeks to explore the potential benefits of singing as a support of maternal wellbeing and its role in enhancing the parent-infant relationship. Throughout the centuries, music has played an integral role in human existence with singing in particular serving as a universal language that transcends boundaries and connects us on a deep, emotional level (Bonnar, 2014). As the world advances in the digital age, this timeless art of singing remains a powerful tool for celebrating triumphs, soothing sorrows and strengthening relationships. There is growing evidence that singing can enhance mental wellbeing, and the latest research has concentrated on understanding the biological, psychological and social potential benefits of singing (Gick, 2012; Clift et al., 2012). The ability to convey emotion and facilitate communication may have the potential to play a pivotal role in the well-being of mothers and their profound bond with their infants. Throughout a preliminary study for this project, I discovered fewer studies on the role of singing as support for maternal wellbeing and limited attention on the correlation between singing and bond mother-infant (Lutkiewicz et al., 2020; Wulff, 2021). Therefore this project aims to examine and provide empirical evidence of the impact of singing on mothers and the parent-infant relationship, contributing to a broader understanding of the multifaceted benefits of singing in the context of maternal care.

Becoming a mother is a profound and transformative journey, marked by moments of profound joy, tenderness, and love. However, this path is also filled with challenges, uncertainties, and moments of self-doubt (Ilari, 2021). This research suggests that participating in pleasurable and

artistic endeavours, such as singing, can enhance the overall wellness of new mothers while providing a dual advantage; not only can it help alleviate postpartum mental health struggles, leading to more content and resilient moms, but it can also cultivate a nurturing and secure environment that strengthens the parent-child bond, ultimately benefiting the infant's growth and development (Bonnar, 2014; Fancourt and Perkins, 2018). By conducting singing workshops with mothers, recruiting and analysing data with the use of research instruments, I aim to fill a gap in the market, providing mothers with evidence-based workshops, allowing them to have time for themselves again, and contributing to their emotional and physical well-being. This project will assist me in developing my informed and evidence-based practice, which aims to offer inclusive singing workshop to mothers, providing a space for expression, support and sharing; moreover, I intend to bring to the attention of Italian institutions and raise awareness in regards to the potential benefits of singing on maternal wellbeing and bond with baby (Ragan, 2018). To conclude, "Melodies of Motherhood" is a research project motivated by understanding the deep connection between maternal health and the bond between parent and infant. By investigating the therapeutic benefits of singing, this study aims to support and empower mothers, enhance their motherhood experiences, and foster the healthy development of parent-infant relationships.

To summarise my research question, aims and objectives are the following:

How does singing contribute to maternal well-being and the development of the parent-infant bond?

Aims of Research Activity

- To investigate further and consolidate how singing effects wellbeing
- To understand how singing may contribute and enhance maternal wellbeing and relationship with the infant
- To understand how singing may be a useful support if any distress occurs during the post-partum period
- To assess the effectiveness of inclusive singing workshops for mothers
- To consult with experts and professionals who work in the sector

Objectives of Research Activity

- To conduct a thorough literature review on the effects of singing on maternal well-being and mother-infant bonding

- To design inclusive singing workshops that promotes a sense of community where mothers engage in singing activities
- To collect and analyse the data accrued to evaluate the outcomes of the workshop

LITERATURE REVIEW

All through history and over cultures, music has been part of our lives; it has the ability to bring people together and facilitate communication, promoting companionship and intimacy (Malloch and Trevarthen 2009).

“Music exists in its own right, but not always for its own sake...music can awaken us from habit and grant us the opportunity to place ourselves within the 'possible' (what we might do), the actual (what we have already thought or done) the existential (what brings meaning and purpose to our lives and connects us to a wider universe) and the magical (the compelling content that can only happen in dreams)” (Bonnar 2014, p.19)

Studies have shown that music has diverse benefits, including physiological benefits, such as improved cardiorespiratory function, and psychological benefits, such as supporting the expression of feelings and helping individuals face deep worries (Bradt and Dileo, 2009; Koelsch, 2010).

Additional studies also highlighted that levels of hormones, for instance, cortisol (stress hormone), decreased in reaction to music, providing a reduction in anxiety and improved immune system Kreutz et al., 2004; Averset al., 2007; Carolan et al., 2012).

Similarly to music, lullabies are considered relaxing and have been implemented in situations such as illness, post-surgery and during pregnancy; throughout history and across cultures, singing and playing music has been an intrinsic part of an adult and child's relationship (Labbe et al., 2007; Farhat et al., 2010). Lullabies are a universal and ancient song form that plays an essential role in caregiving in every culture (Opie and Opie 1951; Trehub, Unykand Trainor 1993; Trehub and Trainor 1998; Trehub 2001; Dissanayake 2009). Worldwide, parents have used lullabies since time began; it is an instinctive practice in motherhood, it involves oral communication, gesture, sensory elements, that have an impact on the cognitive and psychological aspects (Bonnar, 2014). Simple, soothing songs are utilised to release stress, enhance maternal confidence, accelerate the fall-asleep process and soothe the baby, contributing to the baby's development and the mother-infant bond (Opie and Opie, 1951; Carolan et al., 2012). Lullabies promote attachment and communication, are beneficial for both the parent and the baby, and therefore are an essential part of caregiving (Carolan et al., 2012).

In regards to the benefits of music during pregnancy, the literature proposes the use of music during the after birth period, reducing pain, anxiety and maternal stress (Chang et al., 2008; Tabarro et al., 2010). It has been found that not only music but also the maternal voice has an impact on the development of the auditory system of the fetus; studies also suggest that the fetus will learn to recognize, after birth, the music heard during pregnancy and the maternal voice (Carolan et al., 2012). The literature does discuss the contribution of maternal singing to the mother-infant bond, but to less is known regarding the benefits of maternal singing post-partum (Nakata and Trehub, 2004; Cevasco, 2008). Therefore, in the following section, I will explore further the available data regarding the benefits of singing, such as empowerment, self-efficacy, confidence and stress reduction, on mothers and the mother-infant attachment (Bailey and Davidson, 2005; Chong, 2010).

SINGING AND THE CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING

The concept of "wellbeing" refers to an individual's "optimal functioning and experience" (Ryan & Deci, 2001, p. 142; Gick, 2012). This has been the focus of research on two types of wellbeing: hedonic and eudaimonic. Hedonic wellbeing emphasizes pleasure and is measured by subjective wellbeing, which is characterized by positive mood and contentment with life (Ryan & Deci, 2001). On the other hand, eudaimonic wellbeing is more concerned with maximizing human potential and aspiration in life. It includes measures such as autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, purpose in life, positive relations with others, and positive emotions such as vitality, which is a feeling of having energy for oneself (Ryff, Singer, & Love, 2004). In the last two decades, there has been a growth of interest in regard to the correlation between singing and wellbeing; researchers such as Clift and Hancox (2001), undertook their study on the benefits of singing, identifying very limited data (Clift et al., 2017). Several empirical studies have been undertaken to date to investigate the benefits of singing, and there is an increasing body of evidence that supports the significance of singing on our overall wellbeing and health (Coulton et al., 2015; Clift et al., 2017). Not only does it have an emotional impact, but it also affects us physiologically by influencing stress hormones and immune components (Grape et al., 2003; Kreutz et al., 2004; Beck et al., 2006). Moreover, singing has a significant impact on our respiratory system, promoting deep breathing and lung function, which contributes to relaxation and stress relief (Clift et al., 2009; Gale et al., 2012). In a review article by Fancourt et al., (2015), it was found that singing may have a positive effect on respiratory health, improving quality of life. A controlled study by Kreutz et al. (2004) provides evidence to support this claim, showing that singing resulted in an increase in an antibody called Immunoglobulin A (IgA) and positive mood. Fancourt's studies (2016) further confirm these findings, establishing a correlation between singing, positive mood, and positive

immune effects; however, it is necessary to conduct the intervention for a longer period of time to be able to analyse the prolonged effects on the immune system (Fancourt, 2016). Furthermore, studies on choral singers suggest that singing contributes to the quality of life and social engagement due to what singers describe as an “uplifting experience”; singing promotes relaxation and activates the parasympathetic nervous system, leading to decreased cortisol levels and enhanced overall wellbeing, however, both studies involved relatively small sample sizes, limiting their generalizability (Cohen et al., 2006; Grape et al., 2003).

MATERNAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Pregnancy is an important time in women's life and new mothers experience a range of emotions, tiredness, and hormonal changes that make them particularly vulnerable (Wulff, 2020). Mothers are responsible for a new life, which can be overwhelming; the internet and the society are full of conflicting advice and opinions about infant development and parenting, which may add to the pressure new mothers feel to conform (Copeland and Harbaugh, 2019). Nonetheless, although the internet may lack precise and reliable information, causing confusion and enhancing mothers' apprehension and anxiety towards the motherhood journey, studies mentioned that the internet represents a source of social support through communities and forums, and that women who participated in those studies, found useful information, promoting their confidence (Bernhardt, 2004; Sayakhot and Carolan-Olah 2016). Several studies in the last decade have focused on the impact of distress during pregnancy on maternal wellbeing and the development of the baby; there is evidence of a correlation between higher stress and spontaneous pre-term labour (Wulff, 2020). This heightened vulnerability during pregnancy, coupled with the potential for stress-related complications, makes understanding the additional stressors new mothers face even more crucial. As Mackinlay and Baker (2005) mentioned, the discrepancy between idealized expectations and the reality of motherhood can be significant, leading to feelings of isolation, loss of control and struggle to achieve recognition or pursue personal interests and unmet needs. These emotional struggles, combined with high levels of stress, absence of social support, and economic difficulties, as Gelaye et al. (2016) point out, exacerbate the risk of developing maternal mental health problems; moreover, social isolation and relationship conflicts are linked with higher rates of maternal depression and anxiety (Leigh & Milgrom, 2008). Therefore, promoting realistic portrayals of motherhood with the support of health care professionals and encouraging open communication about challenges, can help bridge the expectation-reality gap and normalize seeking help (Choi et al., 2015; Copeland and Harbaugh, 2019).

Studies have found that the mother-infant bonding develops during the whole gestation period and that is also strongly correlated with maternal wellbeing; therefore, the maternal wellbeing is crucial not only for the mother but also for the child (Wulff, 2020; de Waal et al. 2023). Social support networks play a crucial role in maternal wellbeing; adequate support from partners, family, and friends can mitigate the negative effects of stress and isolation, promoting resilience (Collins et al., 2019). Group interventions that encourage peer support have proven to be efficacious in reducing the risk of postpartum depression (Dennis & Hodnett, 2007). Physical health is also closely linked with maternal mental well-being. Regular exercise during pregnancy has been associated with reduced depressive symptoms (Ahn & Song, 2018). Adequate sleep and nutrition are crucial for maternal mental health, although they are often overlooked (Skouteris et al., 2015).

The ongoing stigma surrounding maternal mental health challenges can deter women from seeking help; many mothers are hesitant to disclose their emotional struggles due to fear of judgment or concerns about child custody (Howard et al., 2018). In non-urban areas, some women may not have access to care or may not feel comfortable discussing their emotions; disparities in access to mental health care persist, particularly in marginalized communities (Maxwell, Robinson and Rogers, 2018). The lack of accessible and cost-effective mental health services for mothers exacerbates the burden of maternal mental health issues (Grote et al., 2015). A study by Sanfilippo et al. (2019) showed how crucial it is to foster singing-based programs in rural areas to support mothers, promoting accessible low-cost music interventions. Addressing maternal mental health issues not only benefits mothers but also promotes the health and development of babies and families.

RESEARCH ON SINGING AND MATERNAL WELLBEING

As previously mentioned, studies have shown that singing has a positive influence on wellbeing (Gick, 2011; Wulff et al., 2021). Singing has been found to have a positive impact on maternal health, postpartum depression, and mother-infant bonding. A study by Wulff et al. (2021), found that singing to infants can have positive immediate effects on the well-being of new mothers, both subjectively and in physiological measurements. However, this intervention did not result in more long-term positive effects. The study involved 120 women who were recruited at the maternity ward at the University Clinic in Düsseldorf. The experimental group underwent singing intervention sessions, while the control group did not; salivary cortisol, attachment, and mood were evaluated before and after the sessions. Another study by Nakata and Trehub (2004) found that singing to infants is correlated with reduced symptoms of postnatal depression; the results showed that

singing to babies is associated with reduced symptoms of postnatal depression. In addition, singing during the post-partum period revealed improvements not only in wellbeing, but also in mothers' self-esteem. It was also found higher levels of oxytocin, hormone related to social behaviour and mother-infant relationship; therefore, measuring oxytocin, could be a method to examine the effects regarding mother-infant attachment (Feldman, 2007; MacDonald, 2010; Fancourt, 2017). Among the fewer studies that addressed the influence of singing on maternal wellbeing, Carolan (2012) study reported that regular singing sessions led to feelings of relaxation and perceived connection to an unborn child. Additionally, Persico's study (2017) found that postnatal bonding levels were higher in the singing group in comparison to the non-singing group in the three months after birth. This suggests that singing can reduce maternal distress and crying episodes in babies. There, it is possible to affirm that maternal singing may have positive effects on both mother's wellbeing and mother-infant bonding.

THE PARENT – INFANT BOND : CORRELATION BETWEEN MATERNAL WELLBEING AND BOND

Maternal fetal attachment (MFA) concerns the emotional attachment between a mother and her unborn baby during pregnancy; the development of this bond is crucial for the physiological need of the infant, and it represents a reciprocal influence on the maternal and infant mental health (Edwards et., 2017; Davies et al., 2021). Although research has highlighted the significance of prenatal maternal-infant bonding for parenting competencies, there is a shortage of studies on the connection between bonding and child social-emotional development (Bicking Kinsey & Hupcey, 2013; de Waal et al., 2023). The role of the mother is vital, as the infant's survival relies entirely on the caregiver, and she is responsible for safeguarding and nurturing the baby; a strong bond means understanding and responding to the baby's needs, determining also the emotional development of the child and behavioural regulation (M'antymaa et al., 2006; Chess and Thomas, 2013; Deans, 2020). Furthermore, early attachments will determine how the child interacts with others in adulthood and creates their own attachments (Antonucci et al., 2004; McNamara et al., 2019). An emotional unavailability from the mother will contribute to difficult infant temperament and impaired mother-infant bond, as reported in the literature (West and Newman, 2003; McGrath et al., 2008; Britton, 2011; Morelen et al., 2016). Field et al. (2003) study provides a biological explication that supports these findings, showing lower levels of serotonin in infants of mothers affected by postpartum anxiety. Postpartum depression is a debilitating illness that affects up to 15% of mothers; it negatively impacts the mother's wellbeing, interfering with the mother-infant bonding with a loss of interest in activities to the point of wanting to harm oneself or the baby (Reck

et al., 2006; Pearlstein et al., 2009; Davies et al., 2021). Strengthening the bond between parent and infant is vital for enhancing maternal wellbeing; interventions that are based on attachment parenting have been shown to reduce maternal stress and improve mental health outcomes (Barlow, 2016). It is crucial to acknowledge the two-way interconnection between maternal wellbeing and the parent-infant bond, which emphasizes the significance of interventions that consider the needs of both mothers and infants. Cultivating and comprehending this bond is fundamental in promoting the family's wellbeing. The following section will investigate the probable impact of singing as support for maternal wellbeing and bonding with the infant.

THE IMPACT OF SINGING ON MATERNAL WELLBEING AND BOND WITH BABY

As previously seen, the arts contribute to the child development and the mother-infant interactions; mother-infant singing positively affects the mother's ability to create a nurturing environment for the child, reduces stress hormones in both and enhances perceived emotional closeness (Clift, 2020). Singing can support the emotional synchronicity between a mother and her child, leading to a more powerful engagement and visual attention (Nakata and Trehub, 2004; Clift, 2020). In current literature, there is a significant amount of research on infant-directed singing and its benefits to mother-child relationships. However, there is limited research on the mother's experience of singing (Pixley, 2015). Recent studies by Fancourt and Perkins (2018a, 2018b) and Trehub and Cirelli (2018) reported the positive influence of infant-directed singing on the caregiver's wellbeing and the bond with the infant. Singing lullabies, instead of listening to music, contributes to stress reduction, confidence building and self-efficacy (Chong, 2010). Incorporating singing into maternal wellbeing programs has shown potential as a therapeutic intervention. Singing workshops, which are designed specifically for mothers, provide an opportunity for self-expression, stress reduction and strengthening of the bond between parent and infant (Perkins & Williamon, 2013). These interventions have proved to be particularly effective when integrated into postpartum support systems. This study aims to investigate further the effect of singing on maternal wellbeing, how it empowers mothers, enhances their motherhood experiences, and fosters the healthy development of parent-infant relationships.

METHODOLOGY

This research has been conducted from a relativist ontological position, since I believe there are numerous realities and people's experiences are always individual (Jupp, 2006; O'Gorman &

MacIntosh, 2015). I aimed to ensure that my research valued diverse perspectives, participants' personal experiences and opinions as wellbeing are complex and personal for every person, by using participants' quotations and giving them a voice through my research paper; furthermore, by engaging in empathic listening and respectful understanding of the participants (Schwandt, 1998; Phillips & Burbules, 2000; Pelzang and Hutchinson 2018). I used the transformative paradigm to guide me through the research process, carefully paying attention to the sensitivity and vulnerability of the topic; meeting and interviewing mothers in the post-partum period needs thoughtfulness and consideration of mothers' feelings, therefore it was crucial building a trustworthy and safe environment and relationships (Mertens, 2007).

A hermeneutic-phenomenological approach was employed to interpret and make sense of participants' lived experiences (Philipsen et al. 2019). This approach is particularly apt for uncovering the meaning and significance of singing in the lives of mothers and its influence on their wellbeing and the parent-infant relationship (Van Manen, 2016). The hermeneutic method supported me in gathering data, carefully considering potential bias that may interfere with the project's validity (Wojnar et al., 2007). Van Manen's (2016) hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology is characterized by a meticulous and iterative process of interpretation. It encourages researchers to engage in a process of "going back and forth" with the data, continuously refining their understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Van Manen, 2016). This method helped me understand how significant is the role of singing in supporting maternal wellbeing and the relationship with infants (Polkinghorne 1983). As a relativist researcher, I expected my data to vary depending on the phenomenon observed, therefore the study was conducted following some criteria, to ensure the validity of the project (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

I conducted this research as a reflective practitioner following Kolb's Reflective Cycle (1984) that facilitated structured and systematic reflection at crucial phases of the research process, enabling me to combine theory and practice in a "never ending practice" (Finlay, 2008 p.8). Schön's model offered in-the-moment reflection and adaptation, proving particularly beneficial for its flexibility and adaptability and enabling real-time adjustments in methodological approaches (Schön, 1983). The combined use of these reflective frameworks not only fostered a deeper understanding of research experiences but also enabled a flexible approach to reflection, providing both structured milestones and dynamic research situations (Moon, 2004).

A relativist ontology believes that reality is socially constructed and not objectively discovered. Research techniques are subject to bias because they are conducted and interpreted by humans, who cannot be completely objective (Willig, 2008). Researchers inevitably have a relationship with the subject they are studying and influence the research questions, measurements, interpretation, and communication of findings.

A narrative literature review was conducted to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the existing body of knowledge on the impact of singing on maternal wellbeing and the parent-infant relationship. This approach allowed for the comprehensive exploration of relevant studies, theoretical frameworks, and concepts. I performed keyword searches in academic databases like PubMed, PsycINFO, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. My search terms were related to maternal wellbeing, parent-infant relationships, and the potential effects of singing as a therapeutic or supportive intervention. The review encompassed peer-reviewed articles, books, and reports published during the last two decades, focusing on studies in the field of music therapy, maternal health, and infant development (Rowley and Slack 2004; Snyder 2019). The initial screening of sources was conducted based on their titles and abstracts, followed by a thorough examination of the full text to ensure alignment with the research aims. Additionally, only materials available in English were considered for inclusion to maintain consistency in language and ensure the accessibility of content to the researcher and potential readers. The application of these inclusion and exclusion criteria was essential in refining the literature review to encompass the most pertinent and rigorous sources available, thereby enhancing the quality and validity of the subsequent analysis (Ferrari, 2015). This multifaceted approach was chosen due to its flexibility in synthesizing a diverse range of sources, allowing for a holistic exploration of relevant studies, theoretical frameworks, and key concepts.

Qualitative research was chosen as the primary research methodology due to its suitability for exploring complex and nuanced phenomena. It enabled a deeper understanding of participants' subjective experiences and perceptions related to singing, maternal wellbeing, and the parent-infant bond (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This methodology excels in going beyond the mere quantification of data points, delving instead into the heart of the matter: the stories, emotions, and meanings underlying the phenomena being investigated. In the context of this research, qualitative methods will facilitate the elicitation of narratives from mothers, providing a platform for them to share their unique journeys, perspectives, and insights (Fossey et al., 2002). To ensure the credibility of qualitative research, I accurately applied the methods undertaken, maintained my "decision trail" transparent and included the component of reflexivity (Noble and Smith 2015, p. 34; Pilnick and Swift 2010).

An advert was created and posted on Facebook groups such as "UK Mums Group, First Time Mums UK" etc., and on forums such as "Mumsnet, Netmums forum" (Appendix 7). To narrow down my search only mothers of 18+ old with a baby of max 24 months were eligible to participate. As no participants had signed up, I changed the eligibility criteria for infants to 48 months old.

6 sessions of 1 hour each were delivered to the group of 4 mothers using the online platform Zoom over a period of 6 weeks. The workshops entailed an initial vocal and physical warm up,

followed by breathing exercises, drawn from the literature review to enhance relaxation; a choice of two songs to learn was provided during the session, ending with mindfulness exercises and also leaving space for anything they wanted to share (Appendix 10) (Clift et al., 2009). A diverse range of song genres were chosen, such as pop, soul, gospel and folk, to adapt the workshops to participants' tastes, leaving out nursery rhymes, to ensure mothers' "me time" and a space to express themselves through songs they enjoyed, as drawn by the literature. As the workshops were designed to help participants allow time for themselves and what they enjoyed, I suggested, if participants preferred to, to share their favourite song to allow participants to bring their background to the group and enhance their identity (Keplan et al., 2010; Perkins and Williamon 2013; Perkins, Yorke and Fancourt 2018)

Mothers had the option to turn off the camera, mute themselves if they needed to, and sing with the rest of the group participating as they felt more comfortable. My aim was to provide a safe space and ensure mothers felt free to express themselves and be the protagonists for that glimpse of their daily routine. I gathered their consent to participate in the sessions through a file sent via email.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS:

1. An open ended questionnaire (Appendix 5) made of 14 questions was utilised and sent to participants via email, before the singing workshops; the questionnaire was created utilising the "Perceived Maternal Parenting Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (PMP S-E)" as a guide (Appendix 6). The aim was to measure and understand the participants' perceptions regarding taking care of their child, providing a nurturing environment, recognising and responding to the child needs; moreover, the questionnaire was created to investigate mothers' beliefs regarding their wellbeing, the relationship with their baby, the practice of singing and in what manner singing fits into their daily routine. This method not only had the role of gathering data regarding participants beliefs and feelings towards their wellbeing and the relationship with their infant but also, had the aim of function as a method of comparison between the "before" and "after" the workshops, as I aimed to understand if any changes occurred (Van der Horst et al., 2019).
2. A semi structured interview 1 (Appendix 8) was conducted with 4 experts in the fields that already deliver similar classes or work with mothers, published researchers whose studies have been focused on the potential support of creative intervention for maternal wellbeing,

midwives and directors of singing for mums groups; participants were invited to share their experiences and knowledge in working with mothers. Professionals were interviewed to understand the relationship between singing, maternal wellbeing, and parent-infant bond. The aim is to connect empirical data with practical wisdom, accessing tacit knowledge that is not found in quantitative studies. This method formed a crucial baseline for the questionnaire sent to mothers, for the structure of the singing workshops and also enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of how vital is maternal wellbeing for the mothers and the relationship with the infants and the role of singing as support of maternal mental health and bond.

3. A semi structured interview 2 (Appendix 11) was conducted individually with mothers who took part in the singing workshops, following a thorough literature review and a discussion with the group of professionals. This method helped me assess the workshop's perceived benefits, enabling a comparison between the "before and after" the workshops. Participants were asked to share their feelings, whether any changes in their abilities in taking care of their infants or their wellbeing occurred, and their experiences, allowing me to understand how meaningful the role of singing has been and potential areas of improvement.

The qualitative data was coded utilising the following methods:

- Descriptive coding and pattern coding were used for the semi structured interview 1 (Appendix 13), as the emerging themes fed my literature review and the singing workshops. Descriptive coding was employed to systematically categorize and label the data obtained from the open-ended questionnaire. This method allowed to organize the responses into meaningful segments, facilitating subsequent analysis (Saldaña, 2016). Pattern coding was applied to identify recurring themes and patterns within the data. This approach involved the recognition of commonalities and variations in participants' responses, helping to uncover significant trends and insights related to singing, maternal wellbeing, and the parent-infant relationship (Miles et al., 2020)
- In Vivo coding and emotion coding were used for the open ended questionnaire and the semi structured interviews 2 (Appendix 15) enabled me to capture participants' own words and phrases regarding their experiences with singing and its effects on maternal wellbeing and the parent-infant bond. This coding method preserved the authenticity of participants' voices and expressions, contributing to a rich and contextually grounded analysis (Saldaña, 2016). Participants' emotional responses were identified and categorized through open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews; this helped develop and

understand how emotions shaped their experiences of singing, wellbeing, and the parent-infant relationship. Emotion coding unveiled the emotional aspects of their experiences and identified the pathways through which singing influenced maternal wellbeing and parent-infant relationships. I also utilised participants' quotes in my findings to illustrate and support the themes that emerged, serving as qualitative evidence of participants' feelings. Quotes provide direct insights into the lived experiences, emotions, and perceptions of the participants; their inclusion strengthens the credibility and trustworthiness of the study, as the participants' words directly substantiate the claims and conclusions drawn (Flick, 2018). They offer rich, contextually embedded information that helps understand the nuances of their experiences related to singing, maternal wellbeing, and the parent-infant relationship (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Furthermore, these quotes serve to validate and authenticate the findings by connecting the researcher's interpretations with the actual voices of the participants. They add depth and authenticity to the analysis, enabling a deeper exploration and interpretation of the data (Tracy, 2013). They provide real-life examples and anecdotes that resonate and create a more profound impact, enhancing the overall quality of the research (Miles et al., 2014).

- Thematic analysis was used to identify themes and patterns in data collected from questionnaires and interviews. The aim was to understand how singing affects maternal wellbeing and the parent-infant relationship (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

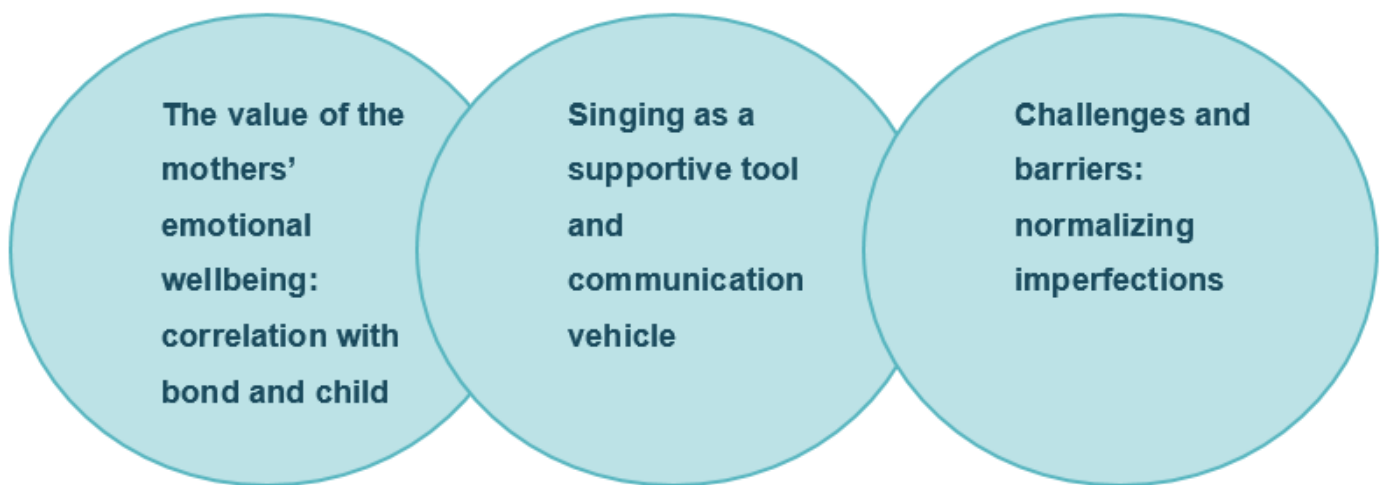
FINDINGS – ANALYSIS

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW 1

A semi structured interview was conducted individually prior to the singing workshops with the group of mothers, to gain deeper insights regarding their experiences working with mothers', reflecting on their observations about the importance of maternal wellbeing, the connection with their infants, and whether singing is a valuable tool to support and enhance mothers mental health. The group of mothers, recruited through forums, social media and community groups, were aged 18+ and purposely sampled in regards to the age of the infant. The questionnaire, composed of 13 questions,

was designed to act as a baseline for discussing the importance of maternal wellbeing and the role that plays in the development of the child and the bond; challenges and barriers, areas that require further research and guidelines based on their experiences, to build the singing workshops. After conducting descriptive and pattern coding, as shown in the table below, the following themes emerged from a thematic analysis, which I will analyse later on in the paper:

TABLE 1



1. The value of the mothers' emotional wellbeing: correlation with bond and child development

Throughout the interview, participants stressed how crucial is maternal emotional wellbeing and how necessary it is for the psychological and physical wellbeing, especially recovering after pregnancy. Many studies confirmed how mental and physical illness are interrelated; therefore the occurrence of post-natal depression may impact day to day tasks (Wulff, 2021).

"Creativity (e.g., drawing, painting, singing...), is a powerful stimulus for fostering maternal wellbeing and that of the parenting couple" (SP03)

Participants suggested that mothers may benefit from pausing and using creativity, which enhances maternal wellbeing and the parenting couple. Participants' observations and experiences confirmed that data elicited from the literature, highlighting the critical role of maternal wellbeing in the post-partum period and also in fostering a secure bond between the mother and the baby. Maternal emotional wellbeing is an essential condition for the development of the relationship between the mother and the infant. Studies by Feldman et al. (2009) and Shorey et al. (2018) emphasize that maternal emotional health significantly

influences the quality of the parent-infant relationship, impacting the child's socioemotional development.

"I think without the wellbeing of the mother, there's no chance for the baby to thrive. It's vital, you know. They say you can't pour from an empty cup. You have to be well-resourced and nourished to be able to take care of the life of another human" (SP01)

Caregiving is an important activity that supports the development of the mother-infant connection, and post-natal depression may have a negative impact on it, since it effects daily activities (Wulff, 2021).

"Mothers do their best, but when there's disturbance to the wellbeing of the mother, then it's just not possible. It's not possible to be there for that infant. An infant will learn very quickly that the mother is not available, not present. So it definitely disturbs the bond" (SP01)

Participants' observation, also reinforced the evidence from the literature, stressing that any disturbances will affect the bond and moreover, a mother who is not available will have difficulties in identifying the needs of the baby; the baby will, therefore, learn the mother is not available, negatively affecting the connection (Trevathern, 1993).

2. Singing as a supportive tool and communication vehicle

"..it's not there for physical survival, it's there for survival of soul" (SP01)

Participants have reported and confirmed the findings from the literature on how meaningful music and singing are for mothers' wellbeing (Wulff, 2021). Creative tasks offer support throughout daily tasks and while caring for another human being, as they provide not only physical benefits but also benefits on the mood. Creative tasks represent an important support during the day, alleviating distress and reminding mothers of their needs; it helps mothers find a way to express themselves and find time for themselves (Reilly et al., 2018). Singing has always been part of our lives and being; it allows mothers to express their music and culture, and it provides a sense of ownership, belonging and accomplishment, although more evidence is needed (Dennis, 2005; Perkins et al., 2018). Participants suggested that singing workshops represent a valid tool as mothers feel at ease and comfortable in sharing thoughts that may be difficult to talk about, because surrounded by other mothers and in a safe environment. Research by Perkins et al. (2018) and Welch et al. (2014) highlights the communicative nature of singing, indicating its effectiveness in facilitating maternal-infant interaction, enhancing emotional closeness, and promoting early communication skills in infants.

“babies from very very young, imitate their mothers singing.. if you spend time observing them and sounding them, they all sound back to you..it’s the most instinctive communications”
(SP01)

Participants confirmed the findings from the literature review, affirming that singing supports an “instinctive communication” between mother and child through sound and eye contact, it enhances their connection; participants reported that babies understand and are able to feel mothers’ joy in singing and meeting her needs, which is suitable for the bond (Nokolau, 2012).

3. Challenges and barriers: normalising imperfections

Following their experiences with mothers, participants have reported a barrier that stops mothers from looking for help and considers singing in group, as an enjoyable time; mothers fear their voice and do not consider that their voice is their child’s “favourite radio”. As we can see in the literature, the mother’s voice allows the development of the child, and infants are able to distinguish and recognise their mothers’ voice after birth, which represents a basis for the development of their bond; the mothers’ voice has the power to calm and soothe the baby, also playing a crucial role in the emotional and cognitive development (Poćwierz-Marciniak and Harciarek, 2021). From the interview emerged the urge to help mothers understand that it is normal if the baby is not always calm at the workshops, as they are in a safe environment supported by mothers who are living and surviving the same lifetime period. Moreover, participants suggested how singing intervention may not always be the right choice for every mother, as women may not feel at ease talking about their struggle, making it for them an isolating experience.

“if you have an illness like postnatal depression, it can be incredibly difficult to even want to get out of bed in the morning and to be able to do the basic caregiving routines. And I think If you don’t have postnatal depression, it can be very difficult to get somewhere on time when you’re also looking after a baby... then if you live somewhere where there’s not good transport links or you don’t have a car, It’s even harder.” (SP04)

Mothers may also face the challenge of actually going to the workshops due to scheduling or difficulties with transportation, especially if they live in rural areas; therefore, online workshops may suit these situations well as they allow mothers to share and be part of the groups as much as they want, perhaps turning off the camera and muting themselves, but still be present and enjoy the moment. Online classes may also solve the transportation challenges, bringing the songs to them, allowing them to avoid any distress and just enjoy the classes. Participants also reported another frequent challenge, which is the stigma for perfection; it is vital to normalize that it is not an issue if the mother-infant attunement does not happen immediately,

instead, there is the need to normalise that it is okay if a mother does not love her baby straight away, due to tiredness, sleep deprivation. Women grow up with big expectations regarding their unborn child, the birth and early phases of life, which often clash with the reality of it all, negatively influencing mothers sense of ability to bond, care and love their child (Røseth et al., 2018). Professionals in the field and health care workers should support mothers promoting realistic expectations concerning pregnancy and maternal affections and enhancing the sense of ownership.

Literature acknowledges the challenges faced by mothers, including postnatal depression, logistical obstacles, and feelings of inadequacy. Work by Howard et al. (2014) and Dennis (2010) emphasises the need to address these challenges through stigma reduction and interventions tailored to support maternal mental health.

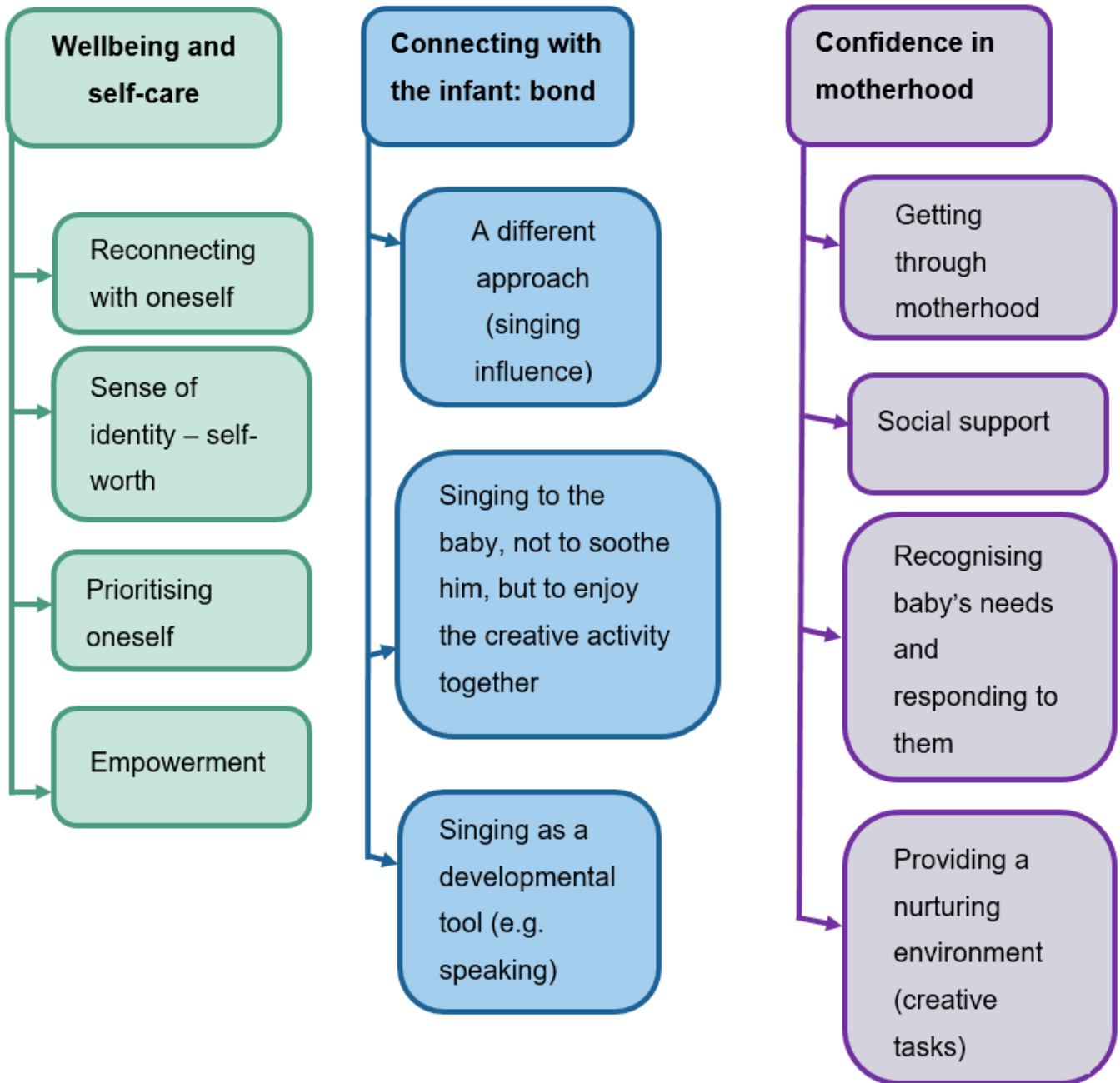
QUESTIONNAIRE AND SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW 2

An open ended questionnaire of 6 questions was sent to the group of participants via email prior to the singing workshops, to be able to understand mothers' beliefs regarding their caregiving abilities, wellbeing, their daily routine and if/how singing fits in it.

A set of 1 hour workshops have been delivered for 6 weeks via Zoom. The sessions began with a meet and greet, leaving mothers the time to connect and share how they felt and how the week has been, if they managed to sing or engage in any creative activities with their baby; before singing, I provided a gentle body and vocal warm up to prepare for the session, focusing on deep breathing, to relax and help mothers listen to their bodies (Kreutz et al., 2004; Clift et al., 2009). I introduced a new song each week, mainly sung a cappella, paying attention to participants' music preferences; a range of pop, soul, gospel and folk songs were taught, leaving less time for nursery rhymes since the main aim of the workshops was to have mothers feel the protagonists, putting themselves and what they enjoyed first (Perkins et al., 2018). I dedicated some time to reflections, asking mothers what they liked regarding the songs, a specific word or sentence, ending the sessions with relaxing exercises, and helping mothers release stress and be centred (Can et al. 2020). Following the singing workshops, I invited mothers for the semi structured interview, conducted via Zoom; the interviews allowed me to gain insights regarding how mothers felt after the singing workshops, concerning their abilities, wellbeing, the relationship with their infant, and moreover to compare the "before" and "after" the workshop, highlighting any changes, if occurred. I coded the answers from the open ended questionnaire and the transcripts from the interviews with the mothers, utilising In Vivo coding and Emotion coding for both, to be able to compare mothers perceptions' regarding their abilities, wellbeing, relationship with the baby and singing, before and after the workshops (Fulton et al. 2012).

From the thematic analysis emerged 3 main themes: *I. Wellbeing and self-care*, *II. Connecting with the infant: bond* and *III. Confidence in motherhood*. As shown in the table below, each category presents sub-themes, which I will expand on in the following analysis.

TABLE 2



WELLBEING AND SELF-CARE

The core of the project was to understand how mothers can maintain their emotional well-being during their journey as mothers. It was crucial to understand how mothers perceived their emotional wellbeing before the workshop to be able to compare and examine whether any changes in mothers' perception and emotional wellbeing occurred. From the open ended questionnaire it was evident the mothers' consideration towards their mental health while taking care of their child; however, mothers found it challenging sometimes to fit everything, including their needs in their daily life.

"I try to look after myself and give myself a peaceful and happy environment and this will rub off on my baby" (P01)

One participant expressed that she always tries to take care of herself because this is linked to the wellbeing of her infant. Mothers reported that they try to include things they love doing in their routine, even though it can be challenging due to the demands of caring for another human being. Participants are aware that taking care of themselves, paying particular attention to their wellbeing and engaging in activities that are beneficial for them and make them feel happy, will have an impact on the baby.

"When I sometimes get overwhelmed... I struggle to fit my own wellbeing into the day but sometimes I find this hard or sometimes hard to motivate myself" (P01)

Being a mother may be challenging at times as the baby requires continuous attention, therefore participants explained that taking care of another human may be overwhelming at times, forgetting to take care of their own needs. This lack of self-care leads mothers to have little motivation to engage in activities with the baby or for themselves.

CONNECTING WITH THE INFANT:

"I often feel tired and feel as though I may be not meeting all his needs, and sometimes could do more energetic activities" (P01)

Participants expressed how challenging and tiring it is to take care of an infant, and new mothers have a fear of not being enough, not doing enough with and for their children, or not being able to meet their infant's needs.

"I try to include my baby in all my activities...I love engaging with my bubba" (P01)

On the other hand, another participant reported a positive connection with the infant, confirmed by the will to include the child in her activities and daily tasks.

"It is mostly sleeping and feeding but when he is awake I try to... to him, read with him, sing to him" (P02)

Participants also expressed the frustration of the first months with a new-born, which consists in caring tasks such as feeding, and building the bond with the child is difficult as there is very little engagement and response. Mothers described how they attempt to connect with the baby through creative activities such as singing and reading. As found in the literature the attunement between mother and child is crucial from the very first moment, as it is strictly related to a deeper connection in the future and the child's cognitive and emotional development.

CONFIDENCE IN MOTHERHOOD

"I feel confident, but often feel as though I am not doing enough to be the best Mum I can be...This surprised me as when I was pregnant, I was scared that maybe I would not know what to do" (P01)

Participants reported feeling confident in taking care of their babies, although sometimes feelings of inadequacy emerge; this may be due to the idea of perfect motherhood women grow up with or the influence of society, media and if those expectations are not met, mothers may feel inadequate (Copeland and Harbaugh 2019).

"Learning to understand him(4 months old). At times can feel like I don't know what he needs or how to help him when he is upset...Sometimes very rewarding, sometimes very overwhelming " (P02)

Motherhood is a journey a woman embarks with herself and an unknown human being; a woman may read every book of the world regarding motherhood, but it is not until the baby's birth that she is actually able to learn what being a mother means. It is a constant and reciprocal learning curve, and mistakes are always allowed; it would be crucial if paediatricians, obstetrics and professionals in the field, helped mothers understand that taking care of a human and learning to understand his

messages is already a unique, challenging job and responsibility, without the need compare themselves with other mothers journey (SP03; Wasserman et al., 1984).

“I often feel tired and feel as though I may be not meeting all his needs, and sometimes could do more energetic activities” (P01)

An important aspect of the project was understanding how mothers felt towards singing as a tool to relax and connect with the baby.

“I ensure we dance, sing (especially now that my baby had discovered her lungs and responding with sound to me speaking) and involve her in most of my activities. She responds by laughing a cooing” (P03)

The participant reported that creative activities such as singing are part of her baby and hers daily routine; the baby responds to the singing mother with noises or laughing, proof of deep connection and communication.

“Yes, we are both happy when I sing to my baby... and it helps sooth her when she cries or needs comfort” (P03)

Mothers see singing only as a way to calm and soothe the baby, while it is important, as mentioned by professionals, also for the bonding and the mother's wellbeing.

“I just love music and the way it makes me feel as songs and music just make me feel calm. I try to sing a lot to my baby” (P01)

Mothers should dedicate some time to themselves for activities such as singing, which will boost their wellbeing; indeed, a mother who does not take care of her mental and physical wellbeing, may find it hard and distressing to take care of another being, therefore if her needs are not met it is difficult to meet someone else's (Bonnar, 2014; Shorey et al. 2018; Tognasso et al. 2022). This may result in fatigue, distress, exhaustion and psychological distress, struggling to keep up with daily tasks; Persico (2017) and Perkins et al. (2018), agreed, mentioning that singing may serve as a support for conducting daily tasks, providing mothers with a sense of relaxation, self-confidence and accomplishment. Consequently, a mother would not be available for the baby and disengage emotionally, and the infant will recognise and internalise these early interactions; as a result, may fail to acquire tools for emotional self-regulation, vital for the baby development (De l'Etoile 2012;Tognasso et al. 2022).

AFTER THE SINGING WORKSHOPS

After the singing workshops with the group of mothers, I carried out one-to-one interviews with each participant to be able to understand the possible benefits of adding singing to their daily routine. I had the aim to investigate whether singing affected mothers' wellbeing and bond with their babies. I will investigate and present the data, as previously shown in the graphic (Table 2), organised by themes that emerged throughout the project to be able, at the end, to make a comparison between the before and after the singing workshops.

"You only get to be one mother in this world" (Bembridge, 2022 p3)

Throughout my research process I have found this quote that truly inspired me and my project; only once in this world we have the chance to be a mother and care for our children, and I include myself when I say, we deserve to live motherhood in the healthiest and happiest way possible. This is why I strongly believe mothers deserve to be supported and understood by practitioners and family, as they play a crucial role in the cognitive and emotional development of the child, influencing the way this future adult will face life (Ceka and Murati 2016; Lanjekar et al. 2022).

WELLBEING AND SELF-CARE

"It was really nice to sort of carve out a bit of space to do something like that because I think otherwise the day can just fall into a run of, you know, feed, change, sleep, repeat...because you've got a baby and he's the most important thing in my life, but if I'm not me, how can I make him him?" (P01)

Participants have understood the value of caring for themselves and expressing themselves, and moreover, how that self-care is strictly connected to the development and wellbeing of the baby as well. Singing has served as a tool to help participants find their unique voice again, promoting self-awareness, reducing loneliness or feelings of being trapped and contributing positively to their psychological health; enhancing participants' identity, singing has also contributed to boosting mothers' confidence in educating their children (Clift & Hancox, 2010).

"Because when you have a baby, you're, in a weird way, you don't, you lose who you are. You just become mum... But I have noticed that, you know, I have been making sure I've been putting that time aside. Right, it's music time now, you know, and I wouldn't have done that before" (P01)

It is essential for a mother to take care of her needs since it is easy to be caught up in the day-to-day caring tasks. Furthermore, participants have reported a loss of identity after having a baby; the

workshops have actually woken up that need to express themselves through music and singing, for example, allowing them to feel in charge and feel like themselves again. Music and singing promote wellbeing by connecting us to spirituality, maintaining physical and cognitive activities, fostering connections with self and others, and helping us understand and express ourselves (Hays, 2005; Perkins and Williamon, 2013).

“after doing the singing and remembering all the songs I liked, I was like, I'm going to go in the kitchen now and he's coming with me whether he likes it or not...and it's made me, put my music on, singing away to him in the kitchen while he's eating ..So that has made me kind of change my routine a bit because I realised I miss my music... I'm allowed to have my music. He doesn't have to have his all the time. It was really nice to sort of carve out a bit of space to do something like that because I think otherwise the day can just fall into a run of, you know, feed, change, sleep, repeat”(P01)

Post workshop intervention, participants have realised the importance of recognising their own wellbeing needs and putting themselves first, allowing themselves to fill their days with old habits and activities they love, for example, implementing singing activities other than nursery rhymes that would bring them joy and empowerment. Acknowledging the necessity for change, participants were given the authority to address both their own requirements and, consequently, those of the baby. Singing allowed mothers to favour their emotional wellbeing, consequently feeding the connection with the baby (Pixley, 2015; Wulff, 2021).

“The power of actually just doing a neck roll or some breathing...you forget and you're so consumed with sort of surviving this person. But actually, it makes you feel better... a bit calmer and more connected to your own body” (P02)

Participants reported that even a little movement and relaxation exercises allowed them to recharge, feel connected and grounded again while caring for another being. Singing and breathing help lower the cortisol level, increasing relaxation and connection with our body (Gale et al., 2012).

“And this was quite good for me in terms of like mental wellbeing.. it was a bit difficult to try to settle...to participate on those particular days when it was a bit unpredictable..” (P02)

Becoming a mother means prioritising someone else needs, postponing any activity that would interfere with feeding, playing, calming etc. The workshops have allowed mothers to have 45 minutes just for themselves, feeding their emotional wellbeing and being the protagonists of their lives again. It emerged from the interviews that if the mother is unhappy, this transfers negatively onto the baby.

“It was nice to be part, do something singing-ish again...it just reminded me I do like music and I can play instruments ...it made me remember kind of to not get caught up in these nursery rhymes” (P01)

Participants have expressed the need to take part in creative activities such as singing, which reminded them of their identity and priorities. The singing workshops helped mothers find their voices again, remembering that they are still the protagonists and they are still in charge of their lives; mothers need to feel empowered and take care of their emotional wellbeing, to prevent any distress, which will have an impact on the relationship with the infant (Keplan et al., 2010).

“Whereas I felt like with this particular workshop, because it's from home and, there wasn't much interaction per se with other mums, but it was nice to see them, other people and their babies as well...” (P03)

Research on the impact of singing has addressed and provided insights regarding the beneficial effects of singing in the group on mental and physical wellbeing; it lowers the level of cortisol (stress hormone), it provides a sense of belonging and connectedness, which is crucial for mothers that are going through the sometimes isolating period of motherhood (Bongard et al., 2008; Clift and Morrison, 2011; Perkins et al., 2018).

“that sort of lifted my mood anyway... I had C sections. I wasn't able to carry a quite a lot initially, but now I can carry a dance around, sing as well, which is quite nice. So I think that's added that dimension to it” (P03)

Mothers' mental wellbeing is vital as it impacts both the psychological and physical aspects, which may affect the recovery from childbirth; singing may provide useful support, enhancing the mother's mood, and helping the mother recover physically after pregnancy with breathing exercises and gentle movements (Neely, 2020; Carolan et al., 2012; SP03).

CONNECTING WITH THE INFANT: BOND

The following section will be dedicated to presenting the data related to the theme of mother – infant bond. It emerged from the interviews that the mother-infant connection is vital for the cognitive and emotional development of the baby; studies have mentioned how poor bonding is connected to adverse effects on the child (Fancourt, 2018).

“I'm just always looking out for tasks that would bring us close together... anything that would help develop mentally. So I do think it certainly helped “ (P03)

The interviews with the group of mothers highlighted their need to find activities that would bring mother and baby together help them connect, as this is psychologically beneficial for both; early strong bond will determine the longevity of the relationships between mother and child (O'Hoggins et al., 2013; Fancourt, 2018). Moreover, a good bond between mother and baby, enhanced by music and singing, is responsible for the cognitive and emotional development, social competence and general intelligence of the child (Feldman & Eidelman, 2004; Forcada-Guex et al., 2006; Fancourt, 2018).

"he started to say mama... I'm hoping that because I'm putting more effort into that one on one, It's helping him watch me...But there's something different about music...Because it's one-on-one... and I've noticed the last few days as well, he's been babbling more" (P01)

Mothers mentioned that after the workshops, they felt more inclined to engage with their baby in creative activities such as singing, and reporting speech development in the baby. Since studies have reported a correlation between mother-infant bonding and the development of the child, it is essential to recognise the role of a valid practice as Infant Directed Singing (ID) or motherese that entails a singing style used by parents and caregivers to engage and soothe infants, characterised by higher pitch, slower tempo, repetition, simplicity, expressive intonation, and facial expressions and body language; ID singing promotes infant-caregiver bonding, provides comfort, security and stress reduction, and contributes to infant social-communicative skills development (de l'Etoile 2012; Fancourt 2018). Caregivers and infants have the opportunity to engage in coordinated turn-taking interchanges of gaze, vocalization, and gesture to facilitate their interpersonal communication and studies have shown that earlier success in these exchanges through singing is predictive of positive outcomes in language, cognition, and attachment (Lense et al., 2022)

"I ended up getting the ukulele out and trying to engage him in that way. And he really enjoys it. I think without this, I wouldn't have got it out of the cupboard. It would have just sat there and it probably would have been like another year before I thought.. I can play that.. that kind of sparked that to kind of get, because I do want him to be into music. I think it's really important for kids" (P01)

The singing workshops sparked the motivation of mothers to get back to activities they used to love before the pregnancy, helping them have a sense of identity again; moreover, it is important to mention that participants were willing to share that part of their identity, the activity they loved with their infant, creating a more profound and special bond. This finding suggests that a mother does not need to put herself second, but it is actually possible to continue being herself and furthermore, include her infant in her world. Professionals should teach and help mothers understand that

having a baby does not mean losing yourself, but it needs to be considered as an enrichment of one's life; motherhood is therefore not a process of loss of a mother's identity, instead, it is considered a transformation and development of that identity (Copeland, 2019).

CONFIDENCE IN MOTHERHOOD

New mothers who face more distress may feel less satisfied and effective in their role, impacting the quality of interactions with their children and the infant's cognitive growth. Researchers have identified several categories of distress, including feelings of isolation, being unprepared, loss, discovery, being overwhelmed, exhaustion, and developing new skills (DiPietro et al., 2015). It is recommended that a comprehensive approach to destigmatise postnatal adjustment difficulties, allowing women to acknowledge their feelings without feeling like they are failing as mothers (Copeland, 2019). From the literature review and the open ended questionnaire it emerged that mothers do not always feel confident in caring for their babies and in recognising and responding to their needs; therefore, it was interesting to examine whether the singing workshops played a supporting role in regard to mothers confidence.

“ watching him really enjoy the singing, perhaps I was choosing to sing to him before more when he was upset, to try and soothe him, and I don't think that was really working, but because he was in such a good space this week, actually singing to him when he's happy and well, he clearly really enjoys it. So definitely choosing my moments when I'm singing to him, perhaps not to soothe him, I don't think it works, but when he's in a good spot, as part of our enjoyment, our playtime together, yeah, it's clearly something that he likes” (P02)

“Singing for pleasure when he's in a good space... making up songs together... singing about tummy time yesterday..” (P02)

During and after the singing workshops, mothers had noticed how the babies responded to their singing, keeping into consideration when the activity took place; participants revealed that if they tried to sing to the babies when upset, it would not make any changes, but if the babies were in a good mood, the singing made them happy. Participants have reported how their confidence in recognising babies' needs and emotions and how their understanding of optimal moments to engage in singing with the baby has improved, after the workshops; mothers have learned to connect to their infant through singing when the baby is happy and not upset, as the baby is better able to respond to external stimuli and therefore bond with the mother. Moreover, mothers learned

to recognise and respond to the babies' mood and match their moods with a suitable activity (Fancourt and Perkins 2018a, 2018b; Trehub and Cirelli 2018). Mothers have incorporated more activities into their daily care routine, including singing and enhancing wellbeing and bonding (SP01; Perkins et al., 2018).

"if I'm trying to change her or if she's fidgeting, I start singing. I know sometimes that just calms her down. Not necessarily calms her down, but she pauses, so I can maybe free her arm or something.. you can sort of use a song to help her, you know, in that way as well" (P03)

Mothers are in charge of teaching and creating a nurturing environment for their babies, moulding them into future adults and on many occasions mothers do not feel confident enough to do so due to stressors and expectations coming from society, for example (Maxwell, Robinson and Rogers 2018). Singing, as mentioned by one of the participants, is a useful tool to help mothers connect with their infants and create a stimulating environment to support their development.

"I mean, definitely my confidence has improved with him...I feel like I understand him more and his needs and how to help him.." (P02)

The participant feels more confident in recognising the baby's cues and needs; however, it is difficult to understand if it is due to the workshops or the time they have spent together since the birth. A caregiver who is confident and attentive to a baby's needs can provide comfort and help the baby feel calm. Consequently, as the baby grows, they continue to rely on this caregiver for sensory fulfilment. If the caregiver meets the baby's basic needs, advanced social interactions, such as looking at the caregiver's face when they are calm can occur, enhancing the relationship; this happens when the baby is regulated (Porges, 2011).

"I've always wished there was something where it's like a mother and baby choir" (P01)

Participants have reported and recognised the need and the meaningful role of singing for building a deep relationship with their babies.

"the more I'm doing more music with him, he started to do more babbling because normally the noises he makes... Because it's one-on-one." (P01)

"I try to have her much closer to me so that she can see my mouth move... I can see that she's looking at my mouth.. so she knows something is coming out of it, like noise And obviously with familiar tunes.. there's a change in her eyes.. she smiles" (P03)

Participants found their babies more alert regarding their sounds and tunes; babies responded to the mothers' sounds with a noise or a smile, indicating connection. Therefore singing is a valid instrument for creating of the mother-infant attunement, especially in the early moments of the

baby's life, where communication and mobility are limited. Mothers have naturally found a way through singing to create a nurturing environment for them, to help them develop cognitively and emotionally and to connect with them; ID singing is a natural and valid tool to promote the development of the child and the mother-infant relationship, to reduce arousal and distress (Fancourt and Perkins 2018a, 2018b; Trehub and Cirelli 2018).

"Definitely generally been therapeutic... something quite magical about singing... in an incredibly difficult time of my life." (P02)

Participants have reported how they feel about singing, considering it a therapeutic tool that represents meaningful support throughout difficult times of their life, such as during the post-partum period, when they face the numerous challenges of being a new mum. Therefore, singing may be a valid instrument to support and enhance mothers' emotional wellbeing during their journey as mothers.

"Sometimes it felt like a challenge to fit it in because if he's not in the right bit of that cycle that can be that can be tricky..but actually once if we were in the right place like this week particularly, he was really happy and he really enjoyed the session which meant that I could more enjoy the session because" (P02)

The participant reported how she could enjoy the session only if the baby was in a good mood. We can, therefore, affirm that not only is there a connection between mother and infant moods but also that they affect and influence one another; as the mother's happiness is strictly correlated to the baby's happiness, the emotional wellbeing of both is crucial. According to research, singing to babies has been discovered to improve mother-infant interactions and reduce stress levels. This has not been observed with other interventions aimed at enhancing the mother-infant relationship (Bind et al., 2023; (Fancourt and Perkins, 2018).

"it's also given me more songs, so I've definitely sung the songs after the sessions.. so it's definitely included that more in our routine" (P02)

Singing included in daily routine contributed to the feeling of connectedness to the baby and, consequently, increased the incorporation of singing in daily routine.

"I feel more confident singing... I'm not a very good singer.. I just like singing... I'm definitely just singing to him more, including like singing to him in the streets, which I probably wouldn't have done before, and like making up songs and things like that, so definitely that has improved and I've enjoyed that a lot more" (P02)

As previously emerged from the interviews with the professionals and the literature review, mothers fear their voice and the stigma of "I can't sing" it is evident. Participants have expressed how their confidence in singing has shifted, making them naturally singing more to their babies and

including singing more into their routine as a support during daily tasks. Singing has positively affected mothers' mental health and the relationship with the baby.

"So I did actually like the choice of songs and songs that I wouldn't have normally considered. I've sort of tried to use those songs throughout the rest of the week as well to sing to her...certain songs that she hears on repeat, she smiles, she responds to it, there is a connection there with singing" (P03)

Participants expressed the need to get away from nursery rhymes because they considered them whiny or too short and enjoyed singing to their babies different genres such as soul, pop and rock. Different styles of songs are longer and allow a deeper connection between mother and infant; moreover, if the mother enjoys a particular song or genre, the baby can feel that the mother is happy and will respond (Baker, 2005).

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that the singing workshops have a transformative effect on maternal wellbeing and the mother-infant bond. In this section, I will present a comparison between the "before the singing workshops" and the "after the singing workshops" to understand and present whether any changes occurred.

From the data emerged 3 main themes: *Well-being and self-care*, *Connection with infant: bond*, *Confidence in motherhood*.

Regarding the first topic, before the workshops, mothers expressed challenges in prioritising self-care and their needs amidst the demands of caring for their infants; the struggle to find a balance and integrate activities into their daily routines that would support their wellbeing, was evident and connected with feeling overwhelmed and lacking motivation. Following the workshops, a shift in mothers perspectives on their wellbeing was noticeable; the sessions helped mothers realize how important and crucial their self-care is. Singing not only provided mothers with the motivation to find activities that brought them joy and empowerment but also helped them reconnect with their unique identity, fostering self-awareness and positively influencing their psychological health, making them feel relaxed; as a result, it also enhanced the mother-infant connection (Perkins et al.,

2018). If the mother is happy, the baby is happy; this aspect is crucial as if the mother is not happy, if her needs are not met, it will be difficult for her to bond with the baby, provide care, to meet the baby's needs, and provide a nurturing environment in which the baby can grow. This finding confirmed the data emerged from the literature review and the interview with professionals, proving how meaningful is the mother's emotional wellbeing as well as the use of singing as a supporting tool (Fancourt et al., 2019).

Regarding the theme "Connection with the infant-bond", mothers acknowledged the challenges of connecting with their infants, especially in the early months characterized by feeding and primary care; on the other hand, they try to find activities that would support their relationship with the baby. Some expressed concerns about not meeting all their infant's needs and the difficulty of engaging in meaningful activities. After the workshops, it was evident from the data accrued a shift in how mothers approached bonding with their infants; singing has represented the key factor that encouraged mothers to engage with their infants and share with the baby activities that brought them joy (Bonnar, 2014). After the workshops, mothers felt inspired to engage more in one-to-one interactive sessions with the infant, which led to a deeper connection, affecting the baby's development and response to maternal engagement; moreover, compared to before the workshops, singing has helped mothers recognise that enriching the baby's life is as essential as enriching their lives (de l'Etoile 2012; Fancourt 2018). Babies can feel the mother's joy in meeting her needs through singing activities; as a consequence, the baby will respond to the mother with eye contact or noises while the mother is available to engage, connect and create a nurturing space for the baby (Brisola, Cury and Davidson 2019).

With respect to the theme "Confidence in motherhood", the questionnaire was built to understand mothers' self-efficacy and confidence in caring for the baby and providing a nurturing environment. Mothers, while generally confident, reported occasional feelings of guilt of not doing enough, influenced by societal expectations and the fear of not meeting the standards of perfect motherhood. Some expressed uncertainties in understanding and responding to their infant's needs. After the workshops, there was a noticeable boost in maternal confidence. Mothers who participated in the workshops reported feeling more attuned to their infants' needs, mainly when recognizing the best moments for singing (Trehub, 2003). They also felt more confident in incorporating singing into their daily routines, creating a positive and enriching environment for their infants, promoting their development (Franco et al., 2019). Maternal self-efficacy and the mother's belief in her ability to care for her infant is connected to maternal wellbeing and bond; poor confidence may lead to depression (Jones, 2005).

Nonetheless, higher maternal self-efficacy is related to positive emotion, connection with the baby and lower distress; as a result, the singing workshops have been a valid support for boosting mothers' confidence (Liu et al. 2021). The workshops helped to let go of the idea of perfection in

motherhood, encouraging mothers to embrace the journey with all its challenges and rewards. It is important to recognize the meaningful role of singing. However, it is also essential to acknowledge that mothers get to know and understand their babies better due to spending time with them. Recognizing the emotional difficulties new mothers face is crucial; moreover, normalizing and legitimizing feelings of fear, uncertainty, and exhaustion can help reduce anxiety and isolation (Corrigan et al., 2015). The study by Saharoy et al. (2023) argues that mothers affected by anxiety and distress report greater difficulties establishing secure attachments with their infants; this highlights the importance of supporting mothers physically and emotionally, as their well-being plays a key role in fostering optimal child development and reducing the risk of postpartum depression. While these challenges are widespread, it is essential to acknowledge that individual experiences vary, and cultural or personal factors can influence specific needs and vulnerabilities (SP01; Levésque et al., 2020).

Since from the literature, it was evident the correlation between a mother's confidence in recognising and responding to the baby's needs and the bond, it is evident that singing acted as a link, supporting mothers in incorporating activities into daily care, promoting connection and baby's development; moreover, workshops boosted maternal confidence towards singing to their baby, which has proved to be a valuable tool to help regulate and promote infant's mood and communication (Rock et al., 1999; Franco et al., 2019).

Creative activities have a positive impact on maternal mental health, and the workshops boosted mothers' confidence to sing more for themselves; it helped them express themselves, find their identity again and, as a result, share this experience with their babies (Mackinlay, 2006)

The strength of this project lies in the qualitative depth obtained through one-to-one interviews, which enabled the capture of participants' unique experiences and feelings; it emerged an evident positive impact of singing on maternal wellbeing and bonding (Wilson, 2012). However, the sample size represents a limitation that affects the generalizability of the findings (Andrade, 2020; Warran et al. 2022). The study design, with a focus on the "before and after", offers a comparison and unique insights into the mothers' journey throughout the singing workshops; nonetheless, a control group may have provided a better framework for comparison (Riniolo, 1999). Comparing these findings with the existing literature underscores the significance of creative interventions as support for maternal wellbeing and mother-infant bond. However, there is a need for broader research regarding the correlation between singing, maternal wellbeing and attunement (Wulff, 2021; Bembridge, 2022). The study highlighted the role of singing as a powerful mechanism for enhancing maternal well-being, connection with the baby, influencing responsiveness and communication; it fostered a positive maternal identity and promoted self-awareness (Bembridge, 2022).

Online singing workshops have provided participants with the opportunity to turn their cameras off or mute themselves when needed. This allowed them to engage with the group as much as they preferred. Online classes also offered privacy when necessary, such as when a baby needs attention or care. Mothers had the option to mute themselves if they did not feel confident enough to sing with other moms but still wanted to feel a sense of belonging to a group, which helps them fight the sense of isolation (Bind et al. 2022). Online interventions may also be a valid tool for reaching mothers that live in areas with lack of transportation (Bind et al. 2023).

While the study provides valuable insights into the potential benefits of singing, there is a need to explore the long-term effects on maternal emotional wellbeing, bond and infant development to understand the sustained impact of such interventions (Fancourt and Perkins, 2017). It would also be worth considering the feasibility of integrating singing workshops into existing maternal care programs (SP01; Ilari, 2021; Bind, 2023).

At the beginning of the research project, during the recruitment process, I provided a consent form to sign to participants, ensuring that participants were allowed to withdraw from the study participation voluntarily. I recruited 4 mothers willing to take part in the singing workshops and interviews; one participant did not attend the interview and ceased to respond to emails after the signing workshops, before attending the final interview; therefore, it is a lack of attendance and correspondence that has drawn, led the conclusion not to analyse the data. As a result, only the data from the remaining 3 participants was analysed.

CONCLUSION

I undertook this project led by curiosity and a strong interest towards singing and its beneficial impact on many aspects of human wellbeing. Mothers' wellbeing and its importance is an area that still needs to be addressed further, as it also plays a crucial role in the development of the baby and the bond (Feldman et al., 2009; Shorey et al., 2018). During the singing workshops, my heart was filled with joy only by looking at mothers' smiles while singing and engaging with their child and accruing their positive feedback, supporting my decision to build my singing for health evidence-based practice. My aim is to build a practice promoting inclusive workshops open to mothers and their babies and providing them with a safe and empowering space as they go through the motherhood journey.

The aims of this project were to deepen my understanding of the importance of mothers' wellbeing, the relationship with the infant and the role that it plays in the child's development. Through a thorough literature review and consultation with professionals in the field and published researchers, I managed to investigate and understand further the meaningful role of singing on wellbeing and its contribution to enhancing the emotional wellbeing of the mother and the bond with the baby; moreover, I gained a better understanding of how singing may be a helpful support in the post-partum period. I designed inclusive singing workshops delivered via Zoom to provide mothers with a safe space where to feel free to express themselves, sing their favourite songs, sharing meaningful moments with their children.

After an attentive analysis of their feelings towards singing, their connection to the baby and confidence, and their wellbeing, possible with a comparison between the before and after the singing workshops, I was able to present 3 major themes that confirmed and enriched my data findings from the literature review and the interview with the professionals.

- Wellbeing and self-care: singing has provided mothers with a better understanding of how their mental health is crucial for being able to provide care for the child, and, most importantly, they have realised how vital it is to find their identity, their unique voice again, through creative activities.
- Connecting with the infant: bond – participants have discovered how singing helped them connect with their baby, how the joy of doing something they love has an impact on the baby, that responds to the mother with eye contact or noises, enhancing both mental wellbeing and development
- Confidence in motherhood: singing has boosted mothers' confidence in creating a nurturing environment for the baby, engaging in one-on-one activities that would bring them together and support the cognitive and physical development of the child.

The workshops helped mothers cope with the challenges of motherhood and emphasized the importance of self-care and supportive partners. Although some improvements were observed, some challenges remained. The comparison highlights the positive impact of singing workshops on maternal wellbeing and the mother-infant bond, with the need for ongoing support emphasized.

Online singing workshops offer privacy and comfort for participants; by muting themselves and turning their cameras off, participants have the opportunity to participate and connect with the rest of the group, as much as they prefer. It is also useful for mothers in areas with limited transportation options (Bind et al, 2023).

It is essential for paediatricians and other professionals in the field to assist mothers in understanding that babies are not always calm. This will help eradicate the stigma of perfect motherhood and normalize the idea that mistakes are allowed. Moreover, it is crucial that professionals support mothers mental health, as it is interconnected with the baby' health and

temperament (Davies et al. 2021). Motherhood is a continuous journey of learning, adapting, and discovering. Further evidence-based research should analyse the effectiveness of singing as an intervention to support mothers' wellbeing in the postpartum period and its feasibility on a larger scale; it would also be useful to integrate this tool in the midwife field. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to understand the hormonal response in the baby and mothers' system following singing interventions.

This project has provided a platform for me to grow as a researcher and advocate for promoting positive maternal mental health; I am better equipped to create my practice and support mothers through this wonderful journey.

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APPENDIX 1: ETHICS FORM

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

Delete the Guidance Notes at the end of the form BEFORE submitting your application

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Brunella Govetto			
2	Tick all boxes which apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
3	Undergraduate Student ☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student	☐
4	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	WAPPAR			
5	Campus:	Carmarthen			
6	E-mail address:	brunellagovetto@gmail.com			
7	Contact Telephone Number:	07543575827			
For students:					
8	Student Number:	2030430			
9	Programme of Study:	MA in Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy)			
10	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Julie Crossman/ Debbie Winter			

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☒	NO	☐
					Date
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
3		Institute Research Committee	☐		
4		Other (write in) WAPPAR Ethics Board Representative	☒		

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research vo, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines.	
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice	☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☒
3		☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

1	Does the research activity involve collaborators outside of the University?	YES	☐	NO	☒	
2	If Yes, please provide the name of the external organisation and name and contact details for the main contact person and confirmation this person has consented to their personal data being shared.as part of this collaboration.					
3	Institution					
4	Contact person name					
5	Contact person e-mail address					
6	Has this individual consented to sharing their details on this form?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
7	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
8	Is your research externally funded	YES	☐	NO	☐	
9	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	☐
10		Employed	YES	☐	NO	☐
11	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	YES	☐	NO	☐

12	Permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☐
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Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

13	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☐
14	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the impact of singing on maternal well-being and parent-infant relationship.			
2	Proposed start date:	10/07/2023	Proposed end date:	01/03/2024	
3	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the three points below: • <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> • <i>Proposed Research Question</i> • <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> • <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain • <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> • <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>				
4	Purpose of Research Activity This research project aims to investigate the potential benefits of singing in supporting and enhancing the well-being of mothers and their bond with their babies. I aim to develop singing workshops dedicated to mothers and their mental health. The purpose of this research activity is to fill a gap in the current understanding and attention given to maternal well-being. By focusing on the impact of singing, I seek to explore how this form of expression can positively influence the mental and emotional health of mothers, as well as the quality of their relationship with their infants. (this box should expand as you type)				
5	Research Question Does singing contribute to maternal well-being and the development of the parent-infant bond? If so, how? (this box should expand as you type)				
6	Aims of Research Activity • Build on previous research, investigating and consolidating how singing affects well-being • Understand how singing may contribute to and enhance maternal wellbeing and the relationship with the infant				

	- Understand how singing may be a useful support if any distress occurs during the post-partum period - Design inclusive singing workshops that promote a sense of community where mothers engage in singing activities (this box should expand as you type)
7	Objectives of Research Activity - Conduct a thorough literature review on the effects of singing on maternal well-being and mother-infant bonding - Collect and analyse the data accrued to evaluate the outcomes of the workshops - Assess the effectiveness of inclusive singing workshops for mothers - Consult with experts and professionals who work in the sector (this box should expand as you type)
8	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed.
9	This is a mixed methods project, led by an hermeneutic-phenomenological approach, focusing on understand the experiences shared by the participants. With the use of Literature review I will explore the existing studies on the impact of singing on mental health. I will also examine the impact that singing has on mothers' well-being and the bond with their babies. Between 6 and 8 participants maximum will take part in the research. All are mothers. Methods : - Self-efficacy scale: the scale will be used to measure participants' perceptions of their abilities and wellbeing - Semi-structured interviews: they will be conducted with <u>professionals</u> such as nurses, midwives, others professional researchers, who work directly with mothers to gather information on their observations and experiences - Semi-structured interview – to understand how <u>mothers</u> feel after the workshops. I will design a semi structured interview with a template of questions. Questions will relate to the knowledge discovered within the literature review and the workshops. As themes emerge from the interview, further probing questions will be asked to elicit richer data. - Open ended questionnaire – to allow participants to share their experiences. This follow up qualitative questionnaire will be used to elicit further data on the potential support needs of the mothers. It will be open-ended to enable rich data to be captured. - Focus group: I will promote group discussions with mothers to explore and share experiences and perspectives regarding singing and maternal well-being and parent infant bond. It will be useful to gain a better understanding of the experiences; it will enhance the validity of the research through triangulation of multiple sources of data

	6. Pre- and Post-Workshop Surveys: Participants will be asked to complete surveys before and after the workshop series to assess changes in various aspects, such as stress levels, mood, self-perceived well-being, and the quality of the parent-infant bond. 7. Diary : I may ask mothers to keep a reflective diary of their experiences to provide additional data and reflections. 8. I will work with thematic analysis; I will also utilise descriptive and values coding
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10	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
11	The research will be conducted online over Zoom, Teams or via email. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
12	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants.
13	NA <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

14	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents <u>NOT</u> publicly available?	NO	☒
		YES	☐
15	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with prevailing data protection law of the country in question and England and Wales. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

1	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
2	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
3	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
4	Use of diaries?	☒	☐
5	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
6	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
7	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐

8	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
9	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
10	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
11	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
12	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
13	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
14	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
15	Other primary data collection methods, please explain in this box For example, 'focus groups'. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) in this box and tick the accompany box.	☒	☐
16	Focus Groups (this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

1	Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
2	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
3	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
4	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
5	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
6	Prisoners?	☐	☒
7	Young offenders?	☐	☒
8	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
9	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
10	Others (please identify specifically any group who may be unable to give consent) please indicate here and tick the appropriate box.	☐	☒
11	Other – please indicate here: (this box should expand as you type)		

12	Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
13	How many participants are expected?	I expect between 6 and 8 mother participants maximum. Up to 10 experts in the sector. (this box should expand as you type)

14	Who will the participants be?	Mothers will be invited to participate in the research. I also expect to interview experts and professionals of the sector. I aim to get in contact with midwives, nurses, professionals in the well-being field. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
15	How will you identify the participants?	I will identify experts in the fields through website search, contacting relevant organizations directly. I will identify mothers through social medial, forums or with the help of colleagues. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

16	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
17	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
18	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
19	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
21	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
22	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
23	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
24	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
25	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
26	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
27	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

28	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
29	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
30	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☒	☐	☐
31	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
32	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
33	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
34	I may record the interviews and/or focus groups, utilising the record function on Zoom or Teams. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

1	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.						
2	Full risk assessment completed and appended?		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>☒</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	☐	No	☒
Yes	☐						
No	☒						
3	Risks to participants For example: emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information						
4	Risk to Participant: I will be recording the focus groups and interviews and transcribing data, there will be the risk of some personal data being disclosed. Emotional distress related to the topic may occur <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How will you mitigate the Risk to Participant I will mitigate this risk by ensuring I use a code for all the participants (they will be anonymised) and having all data stored on my password secured computer to which only I have access. I will make sure that participants feel safe sharing experiences, building a positive environment. I will ensure that all participants have access to appropriate support groups and health care professionals such as MumsAid, Mothersfor mothers, Maternal mental health alliance, Mind. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>					
5	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities						
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>						
6	Risks to investigator For example: personal safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest						
	Risk to Investigator: There may be emotional distress related to the topic. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How will you mitigate the Risk to Investigator: I am aware that I am really involved in this project. I will seek help if needed. I will access the university support team as well as my supervisors. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>					
7	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection						
	Risk to University: Data breaches of sensitive data	How will you mitigate the Risk to University: All data will be anonymised and stored in accordance with the details provided below.					

	Unprofessional conduct jeopardising the reputation of the project. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	I will ensure that I conduct myself in a professional manner and remain within ethical codes. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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8	Disclosure and Barring Service			
9	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
10	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when? I will provide my contact details to the participant should they need a final report and feedback. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation. I will inform all participants via email or online introductory session, of the purpose of the study, their time involvement and what information I am looking for. I will provide an appropriate consent form to sign. Research will not take place without this consent being provided. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case. All participant data will be confidential. I will give each participant a code, safely stored in my computer. I will not share the other participants' names. It will be made clear that participants may take part in the focus groups with their videos turned off, should they prefer this. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

In completing this section refer to the University's Research Data Management Policy and the extensive resources on the University's Research Data Management web pages (<http://uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/>).

1	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	YES	NO
	"Personal data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in	x ☐	☐

	<i>particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.</i>		
2	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected: Email addresses to enable the interviews and recordings of the interviews. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
3	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
	“Special category data” means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects’ – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),	x ☐	☐
4	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected: e) Mental health conditions may be revealed in the course of the project as relate to maternal pre- and post-natal wellbeing. This may be relevant when considering the impact singing may have on wellbeing. It will not be a requirement of participation that participants share this information. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

5	Will the research activity involve storing personal data and/or special category data on one of the following:	YES	NO
6	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
7	University computers?	☐	☒
8	Private company computers?	☐	☒
9	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
10	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
11	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☒	☐
12	Other – specify:	☐	☐
13	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	I will keep all data in a password protected cloud storage or folder on my personal computer which will not be shared. Audio/visual data will be transcribed and checked for accuracy of reporting. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
14	All Data Storage		
15	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
16	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
17	Sharing of data with others at the University?	☐	☒
18	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
19	Export of data outside the European Union or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
20	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☒	☐
21	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
22	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
23	Data archiving?	☐	☒
24	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and DPA (and/or any international equivalent):		
	I will need telephone numbers and email addresses from the participants. All data will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage on my personal computer which will not be shared. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected. All data transfers will be encrypted and password protected. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. In accordance with the DPA2018, participants will have the right to ask to see what data is held relating to them, and this data will be deleted immediately if the participant requests this, in which case the data will not be used in the project.		
25	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Only myself, the principal researcher. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
26	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	Only myself, the principal researcher <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
27	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		

	All data will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage on the Company's Office 365 system which will not be shared. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected, and will be reformatted at the end of the project in order to destroy the data. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
28	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i>		
	NA <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
29	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
		NO	☐
30	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒
		NO	☐

SECTION K: Declaration

31	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
	Signature of applicant:	Brunella Govetto	Date: 14/06/2023

For STUDENT Submissions:

32	Director of Studies/Supervisor:		Date:
33	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

34	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		Date:
35	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (and have NOT completed Section H of this form) (where appropriate) ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.
☒	I have deleted the guidance notes before submitting the PG2 for consideration

RESEARCH STUDENTS AND STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk, with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name. You will be informed of the outcome of your claim by email; therefore it is important that you check your University and personal email accounts regularly.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

This form is available electronically from the Academic Office web pages:

<https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/appendices-and-forms/>

Application Process

All staff research projects and all research students must submit the Ethical Approval Form to the **University Research Ethics Committee** via the Academic Office (pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk). Staff research directly in relation to personal study for taught undergraduate or Masters programmes should be submitted via the Institute procedures explained below.

Taught masters and taught undergraduate research Ethical Approval Forms are considered **within Institutes**. Institutes will provide details of the specific processes for this. Where the Ethical issues within any single ethical application are of particular concern the Institute will refer these to the University Research Ethics Committee. Any student activity that involves the collection of primary data needs to undergo Ethical approval, this includes assignment work as well as dissertations.

APPENDIX 2: LETTER OF APPROVAL

Brunella Govetto

07-06-2023

Dear UWTSD,

RE : *Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the impact of singing on maternal well-being and parent-infant relationship.*

I confirm that I approve of the research proposed into “the impact of singing on maternal well-being and the parent-infant relationship” to be conducted online by Brunella Govetto, between July 2023 and March 2024.

Kind regards,

Brunella Govetto

APPENDIX 3: PROFESSIONALS' STIPULATION

Brunella Govetto,

26/07/2023

Stipulation for Participation in Research Study

Title: Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the Impact of Singing on Maternal Well-being and Parent-Infant Relationship

I, [Expert's Full Name], hereby acknowledge my voluntary participation in the research study titled "Melodies of Motherhood" conducted by Brunella Govetto.

I understand the purpose of this study is to explore the potential benefits of singing in supporting maternal well-being and enhancing the bond between mothers and their infants.

As a participant in this research, I agree to participate in a semi-structured interview, during which I will share my observations and experiences related to maternal well-being, parent-infant bonding, and the potential influence of singing on mothers' mental health. I understand that the interview may be audio-recorded or transcribed for accurate data collection and analysis.

I acknowledge that all information shared during the interview will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will be used solely for research purposes.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw my consent at any time without facing any consequences or negative impact.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification about the study and my participation, and all my inquiries have been addressed to my satisfaction.

I am fully aware that my participation in this research is solely for academic and research purposes and does not imply or constitute any therapeutic relationship with the researcher or any other professional associated with this study.

By signing this stipulation, I provide my informed consent to participate in the semi-structured interview for the research study "Melodies of Motherhood."

Participant's Full Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Full Name: [Your Full Name]

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Brunella Govetto,

26/07/2023

Stipulation for Participation in Research Study

Title: Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the Impact of Singing on Maternal Well-being and Parent-Infant Relationship

I, [REDACTED], hereby acknowledge my voluntary participation in the research study titled "Melodies of Motherhood" conducted by Brunella Govetto.

I understand the purpose of this study is to explore the potential benefits of singing in supporting maternal well-being and enhancing the bond between mothers and their infants.

As a participant in this research, I agree to participate in a semi-structured interview, during which I will share my observations and experiences related to maternal well-being, parent-infant bonding, and the potential influence of singing on mothers' mental health. I understand that the interview may be audio-recorded or transcribed for accurate data collection and analysis.

I acknowledge that all information shared during the interview will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will be used solely for research purposes.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw my consent at any time without facing any consequences or negative impact.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification about the study and my participation, and all my inquiries have been addressed to my satisfaction.

I am fully aware that my participation in this research is solely for academic and research purposes and does not imply or constitute any therapeutic relationship with the researcher or any other professional associated with this study.

By signing this stipulation, I provide my informed consent to participate in the semi-structured interview for the research study "Melodies of Motherhood."

Participant's Full Name: [REDACTED]

Signature: [REDACTED]

Date: 31/08/23

Researcher's Full Name: Brunella Govetto

Signature: Brunella Govetto

Date: __31/08/23__

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

+39 3337513218

Brunella Govetto,

26/07/2023

Stipulation for Participation in Research Study

Title: Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the Impact of Singing on Maternal Well-being and Parent-Infant Relationship

I, [REDACTED] hereby acknowledge my voluntary participation in the research study titled "Melodies of Motherhood" conducted by Brunella Govetto.

I understand the purpose of this study is to explore the potential benefits of singing in supporting maternal well-being and enhancing the bond between mothers and their infants.

As a participant in this research, I agree to participate in a semi-structured interview, during which I will share my observations and experiences related to maternal well-being, parent-infant bonding, and the potential influence of singing on mothers' mental health. I understand that the interview may be audio-recorded or transcribed for accurate data collection and analysis.

I acknowledge that all information shared during the interview will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will be used solely for research purposes.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw my consent at any time without facing any consequences or negative impact.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification about the study and my participation, and all my inquiries have been addressed to my satisfaction.

I am fully aware that my participation in this research is solely for academic and research purposes and does not imply or constitute any therapeutic relationship with the researcher or any other professional associated with this study.

By signing this stipulation, I provide my informed consent to participate in the semi-structured interview for the research study "Melodies of Motherhood."

Participant's Full Name: Brunella Govetto

Signature: Brunella Govetto

Date: 1/08/2023

Researcher's Full Name: [REDACTED]

Signature: [REDACTED]

Date: Milano, 1/08/2023

Institution: University of Milano Bicocca; Piazza dell'Ateneo Nuovo 1, 20126 – Milano

Contact e-mail: [REDACTED]

~~Brunella Govetto~~

26/07/2023

Stipulation for Participation in Research Study

Title: Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the Impact of Singing on Maternal Well-being and Parent-Infant Relationship

I, [REDACTED], hereby acknowledge my voluntary participation in the research study titled "Melodies of Motherhood" conducted by ~~Brunella Govetto~~.

I understand the purpose of this study is to explore the potential benefits of singing in supporting maternal well-being and enhancing the bond between mothers and their infants.

As a participant in this research, I agree to participate in a semi-structured interview, during which I will share my observations and experiences related to maternal well-being, parent-infant bonding, and the potential influence of singing on mothers' mental health. I understand that the interview may be audio-recorded or transcribed for accurate data collection and analysis.

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I am fully aware that my participation in this research is solely for academic and research purposes and does not imply or constitute any therapeutic relationship with the researcher or any other professional associated with this study.

By signing this stipulation, I provide my informed consent to participate in the semi-structured interview for the research study "Melodies of Motherhood."

Participant's Full Name: [REDACTED]

Signature: [REDACTED]

Date: 26/07/2023

Researcher's Full Name: [Your Full Name] Brunella Govetto

Signature: Brunella Govetto

Date: _____

[University of trinity Saint David]

[+39 3337513218]

Brunella Govetto,

26/07/2023

Stipulation for Participation in Research Study

Title: Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the Impact of Singing on Maternal Well-being and Parent-Infant Relationship

I, [REDACTED], hereby acknowledge my voluntary participation in the research study titled "Melodies of Motherhood" conducted by Brunella Govetto.

I understand the purpose of this study is to explore the potential benefits of singing in supporting maternal well-being and enhancing the bond between mothers and their infants.

As a participant in this research, I agree to participate in a semi-structured interview, during which I will share my observations and experiences related to maternal well-being, parent-infant bonding, and the potential influence of singing on mothers' mental health. I understand that the interview may be audio-recorded or transcribed for accurate data collection and analysis.

I acknowledge that all information shared during the interview will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will be used solely for research purposes.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw my consent at any time without facing any consequences or negative impact.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification about the study and my participation, and all my inquiries have been addressed to my satisfaction.

I am fully aware that my participation in this research is solely for academic and research purposes and does not imply or constitute any therapeutic relationship with the researcher or any other professional associated with this study.

By signing this stipulation, I provide my informed consent to participate in the semi-structured interview for the research study "Melodies of Motherhood."

Participant's Full Name: [REDACTED]

Signature: [REDACTED]

Date: 02/08/2023

Researcher's Full Name: [Your Full Name] Brunella Govetto

Signature: _____  _____

Date: _____ 02/08/2023 _____

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

+39 3337513218

APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANTS CONSENT FORM

'Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the Impact of Singing on maternal well-being and parent-infant relationship.

Consent to take part in research

- I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves answering an open ended questionnaire, participate to 6 singing workshops and taking part in an interview after the programme of sessions.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
- This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the dissertation, presentation.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage on my personal computer which will not be shared – until the exam board confirms the results of the dissertation
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years from the date of the exam board.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Brunella Govetto,

brunellagovetto@gmail.com

Signature of research participant

Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher

Brunella Govetto

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Consent form P01

'Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the Impact of Singing on maternal well-being and parent-infant relationship.

Consent to take part in research

- I [REDACTED] voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
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- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Brunella Govetto,

brunellagovetto@gmail.com

Signature of research participant

[REDACTED]

Signature of participant Date 07/09/2023

Signature of researcher

Brunella Govetto 

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

-----07/09/2023-----

Consent form P02

'Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the Impact of Singing on maternal well-being and parent-infant relationship.

Consent to take part in research

- I [redacted] voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves answering an open ended questionnaire, participate to 6 singing workshops and taking part in an interview after the programme of sessions.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
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- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Brunella Govetto,

brunellagovetto@gmail.com

Signature of research participant

Signature of participant Date 12.9.23

Signature of researcher

Brunella Govetto

Brunella Govetto

Consent form P03

'Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the Impact of Singing on maternal well-being and parent-infant relationship.

Consent to take part in research

- I... [REDACTED] voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves answering an open ended questionnaire, participate to 6 singing workshops and taking part in an interview after the programme of sessions.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
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- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Brunella Govetto,

brunellagovetto@gmail.com

Signature of research participant

----- [REDACTED] -----

Signature of participant Date 03/09/2023

Signature of researcher

Brunella Govetto



I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

-----03/09/2023

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

-----18/09/2023

Consent form P04

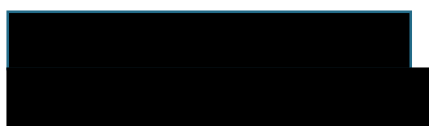
'Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the Impact of Singing on maternal well-being and parent-infant relationship.

Consent to take part in research

- I [REDACTED] voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time
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- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
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- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

~~Brunella Govetto,~~

brunellagovetto@gmail.com



Signature of participant Date **Sep 18, 2023**

Signature of researcher

~~Brunella Govetto~~

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

-----18/09/2023

APPENDIX 5: OPEN ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

Brunella Govetto

Research project: *Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the impact of singing on maternal well-being and parent-infant relationship*

Questionnaire

Exploring Maternal Experiences

1. How do you feel in regard to taking care of your baby's needs?

2. Describe your experiences in understanding and responding to your baby's needs and emotions.

3. How do you empower yourself to create a nurturing environment?

4. Tell me about your interactions with your baby. How do you feel about your ability to engage positively with them?

5. Can you share a glimpse of your daily routine as a mother? How do you spend your day? Is your wellbeing considered in you daily routine?

6. Is singing part of your daily routine? How does it make you feel?

Open ended questionnaire P01

Brunella Govetto

Research project: *Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the impact of singing on maternal well-being and parent-infant relationship*

Questionnaire

Exploring Maternal Experiences

1. How do you feel in regard to taking care of your baby's needs?

I feel confident, but often feel as though I am not doing enough to be the best Mum I can be. Being pregnant, I often feel tired and feel as though I may be not meeting all his needs, and sometimes could do more energetic activities!

2. Describe your experiences in understanding and responding to your baby's needs and emotions.

I am a first-time mum, it's been a roller coaster, but I feel as though I know exactly what my baby wants and needs and can always pinpoint this. I feel as though I know him well and when he needs something or feels upset, I can say what it is rather than trying to guess. This surprised me as when I was pregnant, I was scared that maybe I would not know what to do!

3. How do you empower yourself to create a nurturing environment?

I try to look after myself and give myself a peaceful and happy environment and this will rub off on my baby. I try to include my baby in all my activities and try to give my baby new experiences as much as I can.

4. Tell me about your interactions with your baby. How do you feel about your ability to engage positively with them?

I love engaging with my bubba! Could cuddle and kiss him all day! I have been looking after children for work all my life but with my baby it is such a joy! I do worry about when the second one comes! Hopefully I can cope with both!

5. Can you share a glimpse of your daily routine as a mother? How do you spend your day? Is your wellbeing considered in your daily routine?

I try to include things for me in my routine, especially now as have 9-month-old and 5 months pregnant. This is not always easy, but I try! I try to stick to three meals a day for my baby as well as at least once a day going out etc. I have a list on the wall for chores because I try to everything all at once and this is when I sometimes get overwhelmed. I struggle to fit my own wellbeing into the day but sometimes I find this hard or sometimes hard to motivate myself.

6. Is singing part of your daily routine? How does it make you feel?

I love singing! Smooth radio is my best friend haha! I used to be part of community choir – I cannot sing a note though! I just love music and the way it makes me feel as songs and music just make me feel calm. I try to sing a lot to my baby, but thankfully he loves nursery rhymes and songs already. I really want to include singing and music more in my day.

Open ended questionnaire P02

Brunella Govetto

Research project: *Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the impact of singing on maternal well-being and parent-infant relationship*

Questionnaire

Exploring Maternal Experiences

1. How do you feel in regard to taking care of your baby's needs?

Learning to understand him(4 months old). At times can feel like I don't know what he needs or how to help him when he is upset

2. Describe your experiences in understanding and responding to your baby's needs and emotions.

Sometimes very rewarding, sometimes very overwhelming

3. How do you empower yourself to create a nurturing environment?

Support from my partner, reading in the topic, talking to other parents....?

4. Tell me about your interactions with your baby. How do you feel about your ability to engage positively with them?

Mostly positive, enjoyable. At times I feel I have energy and creativity

5. Can you share a glimpse of your daily routine as a mother? How do you spend your day? Is your wellbeing considered in you daily routine?

Mostly at home but..to walk most days. It is mostly sleeping and feeding but when he is awake I try to... to him, read with him, sing to him

6. Is singing part of your daily routine? How does it make you feel?

Since having him yes. We found a song with his name in it, sing that to him. I sing pop songs using lyrics ---on Spotify..Also make up songs keep me sane when he is upset.

(bit karaoke from before motherhood) I really enjoy singing

Open ended questionnaire P03

Brunella Govetto

Research project: *Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the impact of singing on maternal well-being and parent-infant relationship*

Questionnaire

Exploring Maternal Experiences

1. How do you feel in regard to taking care of your baby's needs?

___I am feeling fairly confident and as I gain more skills and experience, I am better at adapting to my baby's needs. _____

2. Describe your experiences in understanding and responding to your baby's needs and emotions.

___I have learnt to look for cues –hunger, sleep, play, excitement. I respond accordingly. For example, when my baby is tired, singing in a soft and gently voice helps put her to sleep. We have a piano at home and my baby likes to bash at the keys and gets excited. I encourage this.

3. How do you empower yourself to create a nurturing environment?

__I try to remain positive and learn from observing my baby. I use a mix of baby led and self led activities to create a developmental nurturing environment._____

4. Tell me about your interactions with your baby. How do you feel about your ability to engage positively with them?

__I'm generally a positive person and understand that babies need a lot of support and interaction. I ensure we dance, sing (especially now that my baby had discovered her lungs and responding with sound to me speaking) and involve her in most of my activities. She responds by laughing a cooing._____

5. Can you share a glimpse of your daily routine as a mother? How do you spend your day? Is your wellbeing considered in you daily routine?

__We wake at 8:30, change and feed. We go for a walk around the garden, and I point to the different trees, shrubs and flowers. We head indoors for play normally play with toys with sounds. Then she feeds and sleeps. At around 12, we have a wash and she reads and feeds and she sleeps at around 2. She wakes at 5 and plays and feeds and plays. At 7, we are out again and she feeds and plays and goes to bed at 9.

6. Is singing part of your daily routine? How does it make you feel?

__Yes, we are both happy when I sing to my baby. She is able to recognise a lot of simple songs and it helps sooth her when she cries or needs comfort.

Open ended questionnaire P04

Brunella Govetto

Research project: *Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the impact of singing on maternal well-being and parent-infant relationship*

Questionnaire

Exploring Maternal Experiences

1. How do you feel in regard to taking care of your baby's needs?

It is challenging but rewarding

2. Describe your experiences in understanding and responding to your baby's needs and emotions.

It is very intuitive — I generally know what's going on physiologically and psychologically

3. How do you empower yourself to create a nurturing environment?

Best I can — mental health has been a challenge and support from my husband is key, as well as exercise and pursuing creative endeavours.

4. Tell me about your interactions with your baby. How do you feel about your ability to engage positively with them?

I am easily distracted. I do best when taking him to outside activities, so that there's a frame and I am forced to focus.

5. Can you share a glimpse of your daily routine as a mother? How do you spend your day? Is your wellbeing considered in you daily routine?

6.30 Wake up

Nurse

Change the child

6.45 Wake the elder one

Prepare him for school

Make breakfast

Make lunch box

Eat

Tidy

Diaper change

Nursery if it's a nursery day

Otherwise baby play

If it's a nursery day, some exercise, errands and some professionally related work

If there is time, shower

Make lunch

12.45 pickup if it's a nursery day, Put baby to nap

More office work and admin, possibly shower if there was no time earlier

Baby play

4pm Reception elder one

Snack

Play

5.45pm Make dinner

Eat

7.15Tidy up

Bath

8.30pmBedtime for kids

Tv and embroidery (shower if there was no time before!)

11pm Bed

6. Is singing part of your daily routine? How does it make you feel?

I sing while I cook. I put music on to time cooking.

Table 1. Perceived maternal parenting self-efficacy questionnaire

Item No.	Item
Factor 1. Care taking procedures	
16	I am good at keeping my baby occupied
17	I am good at feeding my baby
18	I am good at changing my baby
19	I am good at bathing my baby
Factor 2. Evoking behavior(s)	
5	I can make my baby happy
8	I can make my baby calm when he/she has been crying
9	I am good at soothing my baby when he/she becomes upset
10	I am good at soothing my baby when he/she becomes fussy
11	I am good at soothing my baby when he/she continually cries
12	I am good at soothing my baby when he/she becomes more restless
14	I am good at getting my babies attention
Factor 3. Reading behavior(s) or signaling	
1	I believe that I can tell when my baby is tired and needs to sleep
2	I believe that I have control over my baby
3	I can tell when my baby is sick
4	I can read my baby's cues
13	I am good at understanding what my baby wants
15	I am good at knowing what activities my baby does not enjoy
Factor 4. Situational beliefs	
6	I believe that my baby responds well to me
7	I believe that my baby and I have a good interaction with each other
20	I can show affection to my baby



FREE ONLINE SINGING WORKSHOPS



Calling All Moms!



Join my free Singing Workshops and be part of a
unique research project!
No singing experience required!



Looking for a relaxing way to connect with fellow moms?
I'm undertaking my final MA research project at Voice Study
Centre titled "Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the Impact
of Singing on Maternal Well-being and Parent-Infant
Relationship" .



PARTICIPATION INVOLVES

- 6 x 1 hour singing workshops
- Completion of a survey before the programme of sessions
- Interview after the programme of sessions



WHAT'S IN STORE?

- Enjoy an hour of relaxation and singing joy
- Connect with other moms in a nurturing online space
- Share experiences and bond with moms who understand the journey



Why Join Me? This project explores how singing may boost maternal well-being and parent-infant bond.

You may be eligible if

You are a mom
aged 18+



EXPECTED TIMELINE OF SESSIONS

6 x 1 hour workshops

Online dates:

Monday 11th, 18th, 25th

September

Monday 16th, 23rd, 30th October
(afternoons)

Format: Online sessions for your
convenience.



Contacts

brunellagovetto@gmail.com

Supervised by Pippa Anderson pippa@voicestudycentre.com

Helplines numbers provided:

Call 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)—The National Maternal Mental Health Hotline, “Mothers for mothers helpline 0117 9359366”, “[Mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk) 0300 123 3393”.

APPENDIX 8: SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW 1

Brunella Govetto

Research project: *Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the impact of singing on maternal well-being and parent-infant relationship*

Questionnaire

1. Can you describe your professional background and experience in working with mothers, particularly in the context of maternal well-being and parent-infant relationships?
2. In your opinion, how important is maternal well-being for the overall health and development of both the mother and the infant? Do you believe are there any correlations between maternal well-being and the parent-infant bond?
3. What role do you believe creative activities can play in promoting maternal well-being?
4. What role do you believe singing and music interventions play in supporting their emotional well-being? What do you think distinguish creative interventions from therapeutic interventions?
5. In your opinion, do they represent a support for also the bond mother-infant?

6. From your perspective, may singing group workshops be a support for mothers?
 7. Are there any particular characteristics that may contribute to the effectiveness of singing workshops or similar programs in supporting mothers' mental health?
 8. From a practitioner point of view, do you see challenges or limitations in using singing or music-based interventions to support maternal well-being?
 9. What are some of the potential barriers or challenges that mothers might face when participating in singing workshops or engaging in creative activities to support their well-being?
 10. Could you share any anecdotes where you've witnessed the positive impact of singing on a mother's mental health or her connection with her infant?
 11. How do you see the broader impact of research on the benefits of singing for maternal well-being and parent-infant relationships, both in the UK and in other regions, particularly in terms of integrating such practices into healthcare and support systems?
 12. As a professional working in this field, what are some of the key areas that you believe require further research or exploration to better understand the role of singing in supporting maternal well-being and parent-infant relationships?
 13. Are there any specific resources, training, or guidelines you would recommend for those looking to integrate singing workshops into programs or institutions focused on maternal well-being?
- (Optional)
14. Are there certain types of songs or singing exercises that you would suggest?

1. Maternal well-being
2. Correlation between bond with baby and maternal wellbeing
3. Singing for maternal wellbeing
4. Singing for bond with baby
5. Challenges, limitations and barriers
6. Further research

Semi structured interview 1 22/08/2023

SP01

R: Can you describe your professional background and experience in working with mothers, particularly in the context of maternal well-being and parent-infant relationships?

SP01: Sure. I should start with the fact that I'm a mother. I think that's the best training. I have four children of my own and a stepchild, ranging from age 24 down to 5. So heaps of experience there, being a mother. I'm a registered nurse and I've been a paediatric nurse since over 20 years, so I've worked with families in intensive care, in health visiting, in A&E, in school, community, so mothers, children, families, babies. And for, I guess, 14 years now, I've been running my own (name of institution) working with women in my community who are new or expecting mothers, bringing them songs. And then for the most part of a decade, I guess now, widening that to a UK wide network of other women who bring singing to mums in their community. So growing a network of singing on social description too. So there's, I've got a lot of stories, a lot of experience of collecting feedback, what matters to mums, what's important and how to really enhance the bond and the mood and the experiences of mothers. Yeah.

R: Nice.

SP01: In a nutshell..

R: In your opinion, how important is maternal well-being for the overall health and development of both the mother and the infant?

SP01: I think without the well-being of the mother, there's no chance for the baby to thrive. It's vital, you know. They say you can't pour from an empty cup. You have to be well-resourced and nourished to be able to take care of the life of another human. It's a monumental job that is so overlooked within society. We're expected to do everything and everything, maybe. And there's so many risk factors, so much against the well-being of the mother, not just the lack of sleep. We're starting at basics, eating out of your own basic needs. So yeah, it's essential for the communities to look out for the wellbeing of the mothers. You can't undo the issues that happen to a child in those first few years. To get that right in the first year makes a difference to a human's life.

R.: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Do you see any correlation between maternal well-being and the parent-infant bond?

SP01: I think if you have any disturbances to your well-being as a mother, then the disturbances, whatever the problems are, will take the main seat in your experience and then you don't have this connection to yourself in a healthy way. And if you haven't got a connection to yourself in a healthy way, then you can't connect with your baby and that means you won't be able to identify and meet the needs of that baby, in a whole way, you might be able to do the basics, but in terms of ...not being able to connect and be present and available for a baby, it's rare to be able to do that. Mothers do their best, but when there's disturbance to well-being of the mother, then it's just not possible. It's not possible to be there for that infant. An infant will learn very quickly that mother is not available, not present. So it definitely disturbs the bond.

R: What role do you believe creative activities can play in promoting maternal well-being?

SP01: I'm a big believer in anything that can express itself in a creative way, whatever that is, like in any given day, if you approach a task with a creative mind-set, even if that is the housework tasks. So this comes from my experience of being a mother mainly. So when I'm looking after my children and I have tasks to do alongside them, if I'm doing that task

like resentfully and like with like, I'm never going to get through this cooking the dinner or cleaning up the house, whatever it is, if I've got that kind of mind-set of, ah, then my children are in that mind-set with me. You know, they don't want me to do it. They're feeling all of that. But, you know, the children love tidy up time if you make it a game. You know, if you're in a creative experience, then I can't remember exactly what your question was around...

R: Oh, sorry. What role do you believe creative activities can play in promoting maternal well-being?

SP01: Promoting maternal well-being, yeah. So I'm kind of going a bit more globally now, in the experience of being a mum in the world and being able to have creative expression. So obviously, just looking after a... Birthing a child is a creative expression, you're creating a human. Creating meals, creating environments, creating... so creativity is essential. Like this is what we're all doing, we create our work. So when there's the absence of that, when that isn't enjoyed, when that isn't... because of disturbances, because of challenges, even if it's just the simple things of lack of sleep and lack of purpose and meaning and drive, all of those things that can impact a mother, change their identity. When you don't really relate to your activities that you're doing as creative, as you're bringing an activity that is all about creativity, such as crafting or singing, then it gives a whole dose, like a real dose and experience and immersion of being in a creative process together. And so that is, it's really important to remind mums of that, their own need to be in creativity and their own need to be in play and that feeling of creating together with others. So yeah, there's a lot to say about the role of creativity. I think it's very absent in many people's lives, in the way society is, and the way that everything is kind of pre-packed and ready-made for us, even our cooking and our food, so much of it is ready-made. We're not kind of working on the whole, we're not crafting meals in the same way, we're not reliant on knowing traditional crafts and creating things anymore because things are so ready-made. So there's a real absence anyway in mothering now compared to just a few decades ago where we would be making things, we would be perhaps rowing or, you know, I think it's a bit of I'm talking more generally in terms of humans, how much they create in their everyday lives. It's very

little. We spend time creating things. It's so important now, the snapshot of now, how it is for mothers to have experience of that realm that you go to when you're creating together.

R.: Yeah, absolutely.

SP01: There's a, there's a, there's a, when you're in creativity, generally you're, you are bringing together different parts of something together to create a whole. That's what kind of, if you're weaving, you're bringing threads together to create a fabric. In your building, you're bringing materials together to create a running. There's lots of echoes of that in automotive, like pottery, you're bringing the display together to make a whole. And it's the same in singing, you're bringing together different parts to create a whole. And that, in terms healing seems to be something that belongs. If you look at rehabilitation therapies and you look at curative education, that's the modality of healing they use, taking lots of parts, bringing them together to create something. So, the well-being, yes, is very important.

R.: What role do you believe singing and music interventions play in supporting their emotional well-being?

SP01: I think music and singing are two separate things that are both together as well

R. Yeah, obviously.

SP01: Yeah, I think music and singing two separate things to draw together as well. I think singing as a means to well-being is such a quick access to the things that can support us to be in the present moment, to feel more physically well. Like an instant big breath, like deeper breathing, circulatory regulation, taking us out of our thinking, out of this, as a mindfulness activity. it's a very instant, quick, free tool that we all possess. if we can get out of this unfortunate situation where people think they can't sing, if we can get out of that, then it's a wonderful tool in the tool box of parenting because, then it's a wonderful tool in the toolbox for parenting because children respond so quickly to singing as you can sing your instructions to them, they respond so much easier.

Its...certainly as a mother I have found it such an incredible tool to use for parenting and in life if I remember to sing, in moments where I'm really struggling then it gets... it frees me out of it, it shifts my mood very quickly. Music, I think, it's the one universal language isn't it?

R. Yeah absolutely.

SP01: it's a human expression like I always say there's only two truths in life, music and nature, so to have music within families and within homes, I believe many people don't have music in their homes..and it's certainly through the pandemic was for me personally, the thing that kept me going. We have this hierarchy of needs, music is not in there I never understood why..surely it's there.

R: it should be

SP01: it's not there for physical survival, it's there for survival of soul, and...

R. I do remember everyone singing on their balcony during covid and it was a way to communicate and a way to feel, that we are still together in a way..to be together and also to feel much better as you know, for our mental health..in that period..

SP01: I think there's probably studied that backed this up but, for my experience...babies from very very young, imitate their mothers singing..if you spend long enough and I think, one of the baby ...the child of our time..from the new-born they will..if you spend time observing them and sounding them, they all sound back to you..it's the most instinctive communications, but sadly there is so much in our society, we haven't got a living tradition of singing that tell us otherwise, it goes against that natural instinct where you just watch the babies and they'll show you.

R: In your opinion, do they represent a support for also the bond mother-infant?

SP01: so one of my favourite things to talk about when I talk about singing mamas...when they say tell me about singing mamas, is it for the moms, and I say yes and it's for the babies. And my repeated impression of the new mum come with a small person, when she starts singing, the little one looks up at the mum like, with this wide expression of surprise and the face says, I have never seen you doing this before, like they have seen an

impression of their mum that they have never seen before like, their mum is doing something she loves for herself she is her own joy and that child knows that...that face is a new face, it is a new expression and the child hasn't seen before.

Their mum is doing something she loves for herself. She's in her own joy and that child knows that face is a new face, a new expression and the child hasn't seen it before. And the image I have of that baby turning and looking up like that is one that will stay with me forever and I see it every time. I see it again and again and again and again. And that is an incredible experience for the child to have with the mother that is there. They don't see it because the mum is so busy. And when they go to baby classes, with the baby songs, you know, there's absolutely a place for nursery rhymes and all of that. It's really important. But when it's for something that's meeting the needs of the mother and nourishing them on a human level, on an adult level, the baby seeing and noticing that is very good for the relationship.

R.: From your perspective, may singing group workshops be a support for mothers?

SP01: Yeah, amplified, because you have the harmony, you have extra voices, and so you have the, as well as that experience of, you know, the baby's favourite thing to hear is the mother's voice. There's nothing better and clearer and more loving than hearing that mother's voice, especially singing. But when you then add in to the mix a song with layers of harmony and layers of different voices, then there's this holding. There's such mystery still about what is a voice. And we know that there are sound ways that we can measure, but the uniqueness of each voice that's kind of in the space, especially a circle, where that child is held within that, the sound vibrations and the experience of being within that song and everything that's on the bringing, it is tremendous layers of physical education and positive experience and safety and shared experience. And there's so much learning for that child within that, so that they become musicians. They become musicians. They become lovers of music.

R.: Based on your experience, what are some of the potential barriers or challenges that mothers might face when participating in singing workshops or engaging in creative activities to support their well-being?

SP01.: Well, the obvious one is that so many people believe they can't sing because of all the messages, direct and indirect messages that people have had about whether they are allowed to sing. And it's strong, you know, it's really strong. I've had big groups of people that I've worked with for the first time and I said, how many people here are singers? And I do this like scale, like this is yes I am a singer, this is no I'm not a singer. And 100% of them will put their hands there and say no I'm not a singer... the idea that people believe I am not a singer is so strong in our culture here, in this part of the world, and in others, that it's like, it feels so criminal, like a criminal act. We're born with a body that can move, and we're born with a voice that can speak and move and sing, but people don't. And if you look at other traditions, other cultures, where they have had singing as a people since the beginning of time. The way the Baka community, Baka people in Western Cameroon, who studied like lark, you know, no Baka person ever said they couldn't sing. And the things that they can sing and the way they can use their voices is phenomenal. Like you can't even understand what you're hearing just with the voice because they've and experience of singing, sounding, using rhythms without any disturbances to that, and the limitations of people's voices. You know, people sometimes come to the singing room and they feel blocked because of this, to relax and to be able to feel the impact, feel the emotions. And when you can observe this in the culture of our group so that you really support that, allowing that woman to feel and express the emotions. And sometimes that can be just the first time they've connected to their own emotional life. And that's why to do it really safely and to know that you're looking out for that woman who might be touching on emotions that she hasn't been to, locked away. And that might be a first time experience. And it's very often very life changing for people to have that experience safely in a group and be seen, have a little tear or to feel alive or whatever it is. Emotional expression is also quite stifled in this part of the world that we're in. And so to create a space where songs will come and open that up has to be done very carefully. People want to have their own

journey with that, but also having that emotional literacy, being able to express emotionally and having your child see that is also very connecting and very bonding. Yeah.

R.: From a practitioner point of you, do you see challenges or limitations in using singing or music-based interventions to support maternal well-being?

SP01.: I mean, sometimes language can be a barrier. You have to be mindful of diverse languages. Disability. There's a lot that we don't understand about what is inaccessible about our roots. Obviously the design for people that are seeing and hearing. just venues can be very limiting for someone that can't access the venue or is disabled in some way. It's astonishingly ableist, our society. Children with sensitivities that can't enjoy the experience we've seen, strong impression, or that have other needs greater than to be in that space, that can be hard for them to be able to access the group that they're told is not suited to that environment. Sometimes it's a case of identity, like, can I identify with this group of women? Do I belong? Am I someone that can fit in there? There's a strong impression sometimes that that's not me, I don't fit that because I don't present myself in that way, and that And that can be a barrier and a challenge. I've had women feedback to me before that they've watched single mothers be in their area for years, thinking they can't join, and then one day they join and you've got a tiny homophobia. So that's identity as a barrier. What is your normal? What does normal look like to you? How do you describe, you know, also mothering styles, parenting styles, there can be a perception that this is only for the mother-hippie types, you know, whatever. So, you know, to be inclusive of people on all political end of spectrums and world views and parenting styles is actually quite helpful to have something like group singing because there isn't the room for small talk and chit-chat. There's not so much space for comparing who's doing what or what you noted for or how you beat a kick because you're doing singing. And so that's what connects you and that's what you're in. And you can't do it without the other people. So it's very But yeah, putting a group of mothers together, there's always going to be our own judgments of ourselves and our inadequacies or judgments of others. That's an ingrained kind of cult thing that we have to cope with.

R.: Could you share any anecdotes where you've witnessed the positive impact of singing on a mother's mental health or her connection with her infant?

SP01: I think the eye contact is something. In one of our groups, one of our on-prescription groups, we had a mum that came and we had her background because it's a closed group and she was referred by health professionals and she had bonding issues with her baby and we had an assistant that was making observations as part of the group just so they could feed back to the mums. And this one mum was observed to have this very sustained period of eye contact with her little one during a particular song. And then the mum, the artist, shared that with the mum and said, I really noticed during that song that you had this whole eye contact going on with your baby, like you're loving it. And she said that it was his favourite song and she sang it to every week after that, but this was like the way in. This particular song was the way in for them to have a connection. I can't recall that bit because we haven't been able to really look at it. I think the... I've had so many mums share with me about how the little ones are on their lap or playing in the middle, and they don't realise, the mums haven't realized that the children are learning these songs. And then in the afternoon or through the week, the mum writes me crazily like, I can't believe it, she sang the whole song. I didn't even know she was learning it.

And then I get sent a video of the little one in the pram. You can't even speak sentences yet, but it's singing the song. It's mostly like comprehensible language. So the language development and the mum just delightfully like, you know, singing along with this child. They're like sponges. They grow and develop through imitating. Children grow up, they copy. They watch, they might be thinking that they're not doing anything, but the songs go in. And countless times have been shared videos of the children's babies singing Yeah. As well as that, you know, the reason I started to scale this was because every week for years I had people telling me it was their life line. And this is the same message we have from all of the groups. We have people that come and they say, I don't know if I d'be here that wasn't for this new group every week. So it's strong.

And it took me years to really take notice of that feedback because, you know, the statistics The statistics for mental illness for mothers, new mothers, is terrifying. Suicide being the leading cause of death for pregnancy and the baby after one. And we know that

the 70% of the women are down playing the severity of their symptoms, so we know that many of the women in our group are really, really struggling with terrible things at home and so to have this feedback that it's been a lifeline every week, it's what drives us.

R. No, I'm sorry. The... My computer has gone crazy. One of the many reasons why I chose this topic was actually because there is not, or is very limited, in Italy when it comes to like singing and music and when I was looking to recruit mothers for my singing workshops that I would do for my masters, I joined an Italian group of mums just to understand what was going on here. I've been away in England for many years but I never realised what was this situation here. And I've read so many horrific messages of mothers like, like, oh no I cannot do it, I think I will... and so many stories that I was like, it's... why? Like, there is no support over here, like, unless... and also, you know, you have the stigma of looking for help sometimes, so they don't even do that. And it's really a challenge, and I really don't understand why there is not awareness in this country.

SP01: It's such a great question and I think, I feel it a lot, even just myself, with my little one, she's five, you know, and I'm working full time and I'm, you know, in the holidays, I'm doing both and I'm starting to think like, God, this is so unequal, you know. Just to begin with, but like, the feminist movement has been life-changing for women, and I think that there's a cost, and that is to mothers. There's actually, you can't do it all, you cannot do it all, and we're still expected at the moment to do the mothering and work full-time. And it's like, there's a real lag, actually, about, like, where are the mothers? They're not front and center. There's so many inequalities for mothers. There's motherhood penalties, like in terms of tax, in terms of career progression. Mothers are made redundant on their maternity leave so often that they can't fight it because they're busy looking after a human. The feminist movement, I think, has overshadowed much of what mothers need. And we're still trying to figure it all out. We're trying to make space for the true honouring and credit and support that is needed for mothers. And it's a lot of work.

R. Yeah, no, absolutely.

SP01. what I've seen there is nothing more resourceful than a group of mothers when they need. Oh yeah. Everything can be sorted out by those mothers. You know, it's the best place to be. You know, I thought, it's a bit of a gross story, but from one of the groups, I love to share it with, there was a mum, she's an intensive care consultant, and she had twin boys and an older girl, and she came to my group on her maternity leave just completely overwhelmed with her three small children on maternity leave, recovering from giving birth to twins, trying to be a great mum, like, she was just, she drove a long way to come to my singing mum's group every week and was like, oh my god, like, if I didn't have this I'd be out of my mind. Anyway, she was feeding her two little ones, they were very hungry boys, and she was feeding them in the group, and then she put one in the middle while she was sorting the other one out, and the one in the middle vomited everywhere, like, or everywhere. And I looked at her and she was like, as you would imagine, like, can you imagine that moment? And you've never seen so many packets of baby wipes come out of handbags, mop up this scene, change the clothes of the child, everything's in nappy bags, completely sterile, handed back to the mum before she's even kind of stopped doing this. Someone makes her a cup of tea, sets her down, and it's done.

R.Yeah, we're like a perfect machine

Absolutely, wonderful. Wonderful. I'm imagining the face of the mum's face.

SP01.It's like an intensive care consultant. She's used to saving the lives of children on a daily basis. Yeah. The child vomiting in the room, it's like...

R.I think it was that one drop, they were like, oh my God, I lost it completely. Enough.

R.Yeah. Do you have any specific, not specific, any songs or singing exercises that you would suggest?

SP01. There's one magic little song that I love. I mean, I love so many songs, but there is one, it never fails, this little song, it's called Loosen Baby. It's just got two little parts and it was a woman called Ali Halpert and she's on Spotify, she lives in the US and she's a singer-songwriter and one of our leaders picked up this little phrase from one of her songs and it goes, loosen, loosen baby, you don't have to carry the weight of the world in your muscles and bones. Let go, let go, let go. And we sing that with a kind of like, a bit more of

a swing. There's a second part that goes in which is like this really big breath and it just goes Holy Breath and Holy Name with you. Will you ease this pain? Sometimes we change the words, it says Holy Breath, Holy Name, Will you ease, will you ease this pain? So it's kind of like this universal, like the breath that we all share, Holy Name is whatever is holy to you, whatever that is, nature, your God, your coffee, whatever. Will you ease, will you ease this pain? And when I share it I say, this can be your pain, our pain, my pain, someone else's pain, the Earth's pain. But the act of singing these two sides together, loose and baby, you don't have to carry the weight of the world, the muscles and bones, let go, let go, let go. And it's like, once it gets going, very easy to get going, and the kind of swingy bit goes together with the big breath in this magic way it's got such a brilliant little key for just relaxing and letting go and like, unwinding. It's a really great little song.

R. Alright. I think one last thing. Let me see if I missed something. As a professional working in this field, what are some of the key areas that you believe require further research or exploration to better understand the role of singing in supporting maternal well-being and parent-infant relationships

SP01: Oh, let me think about that. That's a good question. Because I've always said how brilliant there's so much research. I love the fact that research keeps coming. I think that in terms of getting this kind of thing prescribed and paid for ...I know there is already work being done to kind of analyse the cost effectiveness of this kind of things against conventional treatments so that it really does get its due credit as being a guideline treatment. You know, like, you can really, professionals can really confidently say to mom, this is going to be what actually helps you recover. I know that, and I know that there's a whole layer of crisis point which is required, and dedicating and interventions beyond. I know that. But in terms of prevention and in terms mild to moderate conditions.

Commissioners in suits need to be told, okay, here's the data, back it with your money. The money where your mouth is. This needs to be... If we're talking about a health service, this needs to be free to access. It needs to be part of care and safety. That would be wonderful. In terms of what would I like as a kind of more trivial thing, what would I want to be present? Anything that could combat the I can't sing myth. I don't know how that would be done, but anything that would be evidence-based to combat that mythology around I

can't sing, I would very much welcome. People need evidence-based stuff, and it's probably the biggest barrier.

R.Okay. Oh, wow.

SP01. Well, I said it's not trivial, actually.

It's really important that...

I don't know what happened, but for forever and ever, we have been humans that sing. But very, very recent history has been, you know, that would be a great undoing.

It's just not, yeah.

Someone's studying what the hell went wrong there, like what were the things that stopped us singing. We used to be, in England anyway, we used to be able the singing English.

Yeah.

You know, in Ireland we could still sing, but the majority of people I meet in the UK that are certainly with disabilities don't come from families that sang. So there's a whole generation just monsterring.

R. Yeah. I need to look into that and see what I can find. Yeah. Because I've posted my ad for the singing workshops that I'm offering for my research, everywhere. And I received maybe a couple of responses and I was trying to find a reason why, and with the millions probably, the time, the day, but this might be one of them. People people are scared, afraid, yeah, being judged.

SP01. Yeah, it is, it's that, and you know, we're saying this can improve your anxiety, but actually, the thought of it makes you anxious.

I know what it sounds like, I've got singing, singing is going to help with your anxiety, I know that sounds like... Yeah, exactly, I know. It's very, very...

Semi structured interview 1 - 28/08/2023

SP02

SP02: Yeah, well good, well it's exciting and I'm asking you those questions as part of my answer is that I've been in early childhood education for 30 years and my training was not my degree, but my career has been in kindergarten and the younger space focusing on solutions primarily in the States that will help boost learning and school readiness for children who are coming from historically underserved communities. So here are their programs, Head Start, Early Head Start. There's a lot of federal, national, and state funding that targets communities who, you know, for reasons their families don't have the means and the resources to provide the, what children from more affluent backgrounds might have access to, right? So I've done that my whole career. I've been with kinder music for 10 years and that has been my experience down to prenatal because prior to that I was working on solutions that were only age appropriate for three to five year olds. And so we're targeting those same things at kinder, those same populations at kinder music but can now work with, in that channel of our business, with families from prenatal on up. So, Kinder Music serves moms and primary caregivers or parenting adults, I'm not sure what terms you use. In the studio channel, so many people know Kindred Music for the studio side of our business where we credential people to use our curriculum and our name and our methods. And those programs are all over the world and they work with moms with new babies all the time. So I've got experience with both perspectives. It's funny, you're talking about this, I just presented at a conference Thursday morning in Baltimore about singing and secure attachment. And most of the audience were home visitors. So people who go to work with the parents in their homes on best practices. So, this particular audience was for child abuse prevention, they're really interested in things that will reduce maternal stress and promote secure attachment. So, I'm actually going to talk to my team about that a little bit later this morning because it was interesting to learn. Most people know music is important, they just don't know how to teach parenting as adults. How to do it in a sticky way, right?

Yeah.

And most, it comes very naturally to sons, moms and dads. If they come from a musical background or happen to be musical for whatever reason, but our culture of, you know, I don't know, what is it, England's got talent or America's got talent, and American Idol, and The Voice, and all of that, I think people are more judgy about their singing voice. And also, they don't understand the difference between singing with, like, oh my children love Frozen, you know, they sing the baby shark song or whatever, is different from singing to. Right? Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, am I answering your question?

R:Yeah, no, no, no, absolutely.

where there was this person, she was running a similar program, and it was a mother-baby little program, just to help them bond with each other. a mom, every time she was explaining what the program was, what they were going to do in that hour, ok, was, every time the feedback was, oh yeah, but I cannot sing, just reminding her, oh no, I can't sing, and you just reminded that, and it's such a block, like, that stops mothers from finding out how singing and how music can help them, their well-being and also to communicate with their child. Sometimes maybe it's a way to find a channel. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

SP02: And we're really interested too in finding anyone who is doing research on that to see if we can connect them with some of our communities, you know, or our partners, because we've got We have access to the people who work with moms and babies. We have access to the people who work with moms and babies. So we don't work with them directly, right, or provide direct services, but we work

R: Yeah, absolutely. My next question would be, in your opinion, how important is the maternal well-being for the overall health of the mother and also for the development of the baby.

SP02 How important? It's critical.

R: And do you see any correlation between maternal well-being and also the bond and the relationship that they need to build

SP02: Oh, for sure. And some of the research that I cited in my presentation on Thursday, I mean, there is evidence that prenatal singing creates a calmer intrauterine environment, right? And that songs that the baby hears on the inside calm them down on the outside. There's a lot. There's research out there. I don't think it's being shared enough with parents.

R. And still trying to connect to what you said earlier as well.

R: What role Do you believe singing can play into the, for the emotional well-being of the mother? And also, if you see a difference between creative, these creative interventions, like singing and music, and a therapeutic intervention?

SP02. You know who I think could provide some good insight to you for that? Because I don't see that hand.

SP02: I can tell you about a study that we did in North Carolina Or that was done. We had a relationship with a kinder music educator in North Carolina who gained a reputation locally with speech therapists on the impact that the children experience from going to a kinder music class which is singing, you know, and encouraging the singing at home. That's a critical part of what Kinder Music promotes, not just singing in class. They saw

such a significant difference in the children who had that experience that we are now providing that to children who are in the ELSSP, but if it's early learning speech then you know it's basically the state of North Carolina is now treating it as a speech-language intervention or habilitation because it's helping children have gains in so many other areas.. And so I think that question would be best posed to someone who is a therapist but not a music therapist to see if they have observed differences between different experiences with the children they do therapies on.

R.Yeah, yeah, it does. Yeah, absolutely, it does. Do you think, are there any characteristics that contribute to the effectiveness of singing workshops or similar programs in supporting maternal well-being?

And in order to help you figure out how to do your workshop? Is that what you're trying to figure out?

No, just in your opinion, your experience, if there are certain characteristics of the No, just in your opinion, your experience, if there are certain characteristics of the

SP02: I believe that our routines and rituals and helping moms understand that how singing can help them through stressful times of the day. I believe that our routines and rituals and helping moms understand that how singing can help them through stressful times of the day has been popular and well-received because it's practical information and anything that makes your job easier but it makes it easier because it works. Does that answer your question?

R.Yeah. And do you think there are any challenges or barriers or limitations, not limitations, but more challenges or barriers that mothers might face when they participate in these or these creative interventions, to see there are challenges for them.

SP02: Getting to the workshops or once they're there?

R: I think, from what I read, mostly to get to the workshop, to get to the workshops, but also once they're there. I think there are two phases, because from what I read, at least, especially where I come from in Italy, there is still because...

SP02: I really think of one of the biggest barriers is pediatricians aren't encouraging.

We promote lactation support and other things that would help in a similar fashion, but we don't include singing in there as because, and we know that ..through the history of humans it is something that has created a bond and a sense of community and we're not promoting that with female wellness. I think that's a barrier. I think once moms know how something can impact, they want to do what's right, so once they know about it, no matter what their singing voice is, if you assure them that their voice is their child's favorite radio station, right, they're really willing to do it when they see how much fun it is and how much their babies react.

R challenges while they are attending these workshops?

SP02 No, I think that has more to do with the skill level of the teacher. Or the facilitator. If it's done well, no.

R Let me see. Oh. Do you see what... Oh, no, sorry. As a professional working in this field, what do you think are the key areas you believe require further research into the understanding of the role of singing as a support for a mother's well-being and also for the relationship with the baby?

SP02: I think it needs more direct research on, so not correlative research, but really following sorry ... my Monday morning language is not really strong right now. Not the

epigenetics but the body like what is really happening in the systems of both mom and baby from you know is it reducing cortisol? Like, is it, like, is with at least here, there's a big focus on, you know, what ACEs are?

What ACEs are Adverse Childhood Experiences?

SP02.: it's a scale where you grade yourself on ten things like did you experience, often you would link to it, but if it's like you know did you experience, what kinds of traumas did you experience? Okay, yeah. And that is generational and can move, if you experience those things as a child, it can also impact your parenting

R.Yeah, okay, yeah, okay, I understand, okay.

SP02:So, uh, can, I think of singing as a prevention and an intervention, and I don't think there that I can find. I'm actually have a meeting with Dr. Collins, you know Anita Collins? Yes? I think it's next week or maybe later this week. Asking her about the very thing because I can't find any research that is showing stress stress reduction. Yeah. Like we know music reduces stress. Yeah. I don't think there's any, so right now it's research-based conversations, right? Like we know singing with the mom reduces her stress. Yeah. Is it reducing the stress for baby on the inside than we know on the outside. Is it truly, you know, can we study the hormonal response in babies? Is it reducing their cortisol? Is it increasing their oxytocin? Is it, like, we know all those things about singing in general, but do we have it on the baby and the moms together you know what I'm saying

R. yeah yeah I haven't I was trying to remember if I've read something regarding to that um but yeah absolutely I agree with you there is a lot regarding using regarding the mums and the cortisol level. I do remember there was maybe one study where they basically took a sample of the from the baby to to check the level of cortisol, but I need to find it. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I'm wrong. But I did remember something.

SP02: Well, if you find it, you can send it to me. I would really love to see it. Because I did a lot of research for this presentation. I just did this past Thursday, and I could not...but maybe I wasn't asking the right questions of Google.

R: Yeah, so difficult. Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, absolutely. If I'm right, so first of all, if I'm right, and I will send it to you, absolutely. Yeah, but yeah, no, absolutely, like, there is a big gap. And my other question was if you have any suggestions or recommendations for resources of training or training or I don't know songs anything that would be helpful to have in these workshops and they would be meaningful in a way. Or that maybe you know that have, they have, they represent a support

SP02: I mean, I'm, I think any way you can encourage families to take a favorite song and make something that can be used in lots of different ways.

SP02: Yeah. Because that's the thing that I think, like, you can get them to sing great, but then, you know, and there's a podcast, I'm gonna send you this podcast, that it just came out a couple weeks ago on the A-F-B of Australia about singing to babies.

SP02: It was awesome. It interviewed parents who had made up songs for their babies. And really customized them to, like one was about changing the nappy and asking, like in the dad, it was the dad and he called it the "what's it going to be" song and he was like what's it going to be in the nappy you know and then as the child grew older you could hear her saying what be like she was excited like what is it going to be in her nappy you know so I think things like that are really really helpful if you can give them I'll be glad to send that to you.

R. My, everything, my, you know, all this research, and the reason why I started this is because there is a little awareness in the UK where I used to live but then I moved back to Italy and while I was researching I started joining some forums on Facebook in the Italian community of mothers and I found that there is, like you said, there is no awareness, there is, they're basically alone because there is not support and if, or even if they know that they need help, there is still not support out there and there is a lot of judgment, especially in the south of Italy. If you are a mother, you're like a robot, you're like a computer, you need to go ahead, you need to do this, and you need to care for the house, to care for a baby, to care for the husband. But where is my well-being in this? And that's why I went further with this research and I... Because I've always been interested in singing for health in general, I used to be and I am still a singer. But coming back here and finding this out drove me to maybe one day after this research, after my master has finished to try to bring a little, if I can do just one little thing and bring a bit more of awareness of how important is the mental health of the mother, not only for her but also for the baby and the development of the baby and there are so many, there are so many horrible stories that I've read here and we're so behind ages compared to the world, compared to... So this is the little huge project that I have in mind. You know what I think too, part of it is, um, So this is the little huge project that I have in mind. You know what I think too, part of it is, um, culture

in this. And that's why I went further with this research and I... because I've always been interested in singing for health in general, as I used to be and I am still a singer, but coming back here and finding this out, it drove me to maybe one day after this research, after my master has finished, to try to bring a little, if I can do just one little thing and bring a bit more of awareness of how important is the mental health of the mother, not only for her but also for the baby and the development of the baby. And there are so many, there are so many horrible stories that I've had, I've read here and we're such, we're behind,

we're so behind like ages compared to the world, compared to, so this is the little huge project that I have in mind.

SP02: You know what I think too, part of it is, culturally, I think, and this is around the world, younger families are less connected with their their faith-based communities where you would be, you sing hymns in a church, right? Or you sing whatever you would sing in a synagogue or a mosque or whatever. The musical traditions of culture, so you would naturally feel, Oh, my baby just calmed down while I was singing that hymn, right? Or like, I think we've become so disconnected to community music making. And that would be, have been, I'm not saying it needs to be faith-based, but traditionally that is where a lot of people would have experienced it, celebrations and things. And it feels like families are even more isolated from community. Maybe not in Italy, but I see that here. They move around a lot, they're grandparents who might sing. And so it's like the further we get away from that, the further we get away from the musical traditions being handed down as well. Yeah.

Semi structured interview 1 - 31/08/2023

SP03

Brunella Govetto

Research project: Melodies of Motherhood: Investigating the impact of singing on maternal well-being and parent-infant relationship

1. Can you describe your professional background and experience in working with mothers, particularly in the context of maternal well-being and parent-infant relationships?

I am a midwife. My practice is in hospitals and universities. For several years, I have been working with groups of mothers and fathers in the pathways of accompaniment to childbirth, postpartum and parenting. In particular, my professional focus leads me to work with tools that can promote maternal well-being and the establishment of the mother-infant bonding.

2. In your opinion, how important is maternal well-being for the overall health and development of both the mother and the infant? Do you believe are there any correlations between maternal well-being and the parent-infant bond?

I believe that the psycho-emotional well-being of mothers is fundamental and crucial to both maternal and child health. Maternal emotional well-being is the necessary condition for the development of the relationship and emotional bond between the mother and her child, which begins to be structured as early as during pregnancy

3. What role do you believe creative activities can play in promoting maternal well-being?

Pregnancy is the ultimate expression of creativity. Giving life is the greatest creative act one can experience in life. Helping mothers to pause and become aware of this, through the suggestion of activities with which to concretely and freely experiment with imagination and creativity (e.g., drawing, painting, singing...), is a powerful stimulus for fostering maternal well-being and that of the parenting couple.

4. In your experience working with mothers, what role do you believe singing and music interventions play in supporting their emotional well-being? What do you think distinguish creative interventions from therapeutic interventions?

Music belongs to our senses, urges and awakens them. Music is endowed with a very strong evocative power; it is capable of awakening memories, feelings and arousing intense emotions. All this is amplified by sharing the experience, letting yourself be carried away, as I experience with the groups of mothers (and fathers) I accompany during their pregnancy and to whom I propose singing, particularly that of the lullaby. The use of singing during pregnancy has multiple benefits, on a physical level and, above all, on a psychological level, starting with the possibility of maturing an awareness of the communicative potential of one's own voice, experimenting with communicative modes specific to children.

The lullaby is the main musical composition of the sound relationship between mother and baby and helps the baby to quiet down and prepare for sleep; in all countries of the world mothers know from experience how much the lullaby, together with the rocking movement of the baby held in their arms, is an effective antidote against crying. The lullaby also becomes a kind of "musical base" that accompanies the relationship and communication between mother and baby, even during pregnancy and on which mutual affection is tuned and consolidated.

While therapeutic interventions are aimed mainly at the treatment of pathologies and almost always have a connotation of passivity on the part of those who receive (suffer) them, creative tools are particularly suitable for physiology, therefore for pregnancy, contributing, among other things, to promote emotional attunement between the mother and her baby

5. In your opinion, do they represent a support for also the bond mother-infant?

I am absolutely convinced of this, based on my professional experience

6. From your perspective, may singing group workshops be a support for mothers?

Singing workshops can certainly be a support for mothers, because they allow you to strengthen sharing with other women with whom you share the journey of preparation for the birth of the child and of themselves as mothers. In my opinion and in my experience it is better if the group is made up of the same women, during the entire preparation for childbirth

7. Are there any particular characteristics that may contribute to the effectiveness of singing workshops or similar programs in supporting mothers' mental health?

- Create a comfortable environment (low lights, mats, mattresses, suitable temperature...)
- Propose an introductory reflection, during which, ask the mothers to think back to their childhood, to bring to light the memory(s) of the lullaby or the song with which their mother accompanied their falling asleep. These are powerful memories, which awaken feelings and emotions and which predispose the pregnant women themselves to rest their thoughts and hearts, tuning them with the child.
- Propose a small repertoire of melodies to sing. Personally, I propose the lullabies. I propose some that we will then sing together, to memorize them. The women will then freely choose

the one they prefer, among those proposed, or they will sing a different lullaby, which perhaps belongs to their childhood. And the chosen lullaby will be the leitmotiv of their "cuddle" moments with their baby, during pregnancy, but also after the birth.

8. From a practitioner point of view, do you see challenges or limitations in using singing or music-based interventions to support maternal well-being?

I think it would be a proposal to be integrated into any path of accompanying childbirth. In fact, to the emotional well-being originating from singing is added physical well-being, understood as an improvement in lung capacity, breathing and oxygenation, which are obtained precisely thanks to the use of the voice in singing.

Therefore, singing also becomes a very valuable preparation tool for childbirth

9. Based on your experience, what are some of the potential barriers or challenges that mothers might face when participating in singing workshops or engaging in creative activities to support their well-being?

Singing, as an instrument of emotional and affective tuning between the mother and her child, is all the more effective the more the mother practices it. It therefore becomes important that mothers also find a moment of their day at home, in which to make room in the mind and heart, only for their child, freeing themselves from other thoughts/distractions to dedicate themselves and the child inside her, that song (better if the lullaby). Stopping and taking a break is the real challenge, in a world that, by now, lives everything too quickly. It means "disconnecting" from apps and the internet and re-learning to give space to one's imagination to fantasize and imagine, letting oneself be guided by one's singing voice.

10. Could you share any anecdotes where you've witnessed the positive impact of singing on a mother's mental health or her connection with her infant?

- Some mothers also sing during labour, the same lullaby sung during pregnancy and they sing it immediately after giving birth, in the moments of the first meeting with their baby
- Some fathers who love to play musical instruments of various kinds (piano, guitar, zither...), join their partner in singing for their child, right from pregnancy. This creates a special moment, a sort of exclusive appointment between parents and child
- The father's participation in the singing of the lullaby during pregnancy can encourage the father to reflect on the paternal role and on fatherhood, contributing to the construction of the father-child affective relationship

11. How do you see the broader impact of research on the benefits of singing for maternal well-being and parent-infant relationships, both in the UK and in other regions, particularly in terms of integrating such practices into healthcare and support systems?

Research should, in my view, explore the perspective and current knowledge of birth care professionals, particularly midwives. It is a theme and a tool, the knowledge and potential of which are still not well explored. By stimulating the attention and interest of midwives in this tool, so simple to use but surprisingly effective, it would be easier to integrate it into childbirth accompaniment programmes. At the same time, I think it would be important to open a line of research specifically dedicated to the involvement of fathers in singing, exploring their experience.

12. As a professional working in this field, what are some of the key areas that you believe require further research or exploration to better understand the role of singing in supporting maternal well-being and parent-infant relationships

Questions 11 and 12 seem closely related, to me. The answer to this question is already integrated into the previous one.

13. Are there any specific resources, training, or guidelines you would recommend for those looking to integrate singing workshops into programs or institutions focused on maternal well-being?

I think that singing should become an integral part of birth preparation courses, structured in small groups of pregnant women (maximum 15), continuously accompanied by the same midwife. With these premises, specific training/mentoring is necessary, with an already expert colleague, as regards the management and conducting of groups, as well as more specific training on music therapy.

(Optional)

14. Are there certain types of songs or singing exercises that appear to be more beneficial?

The Lullabies, an interesting form of acoustic communication between the mother and her child. Infant-directed play songs and more specifically, lullabies are present in traditions and cultures all around the world. The lullabies are differentiated from other songs due to their repetitiveness, soothing quality, softness, simplicity and slow tempo.

Semi structured interview 1 31/08/2023

SP04

R: Amazing and thank you again. So I will just ask you a few questions and promise, I want to I won't take too much of your time. And So can you describe your professional background and experience? And especially in the maternal while being like field and sorry.

SP04: Yeah, of course. So I'm a researcher and my background was first of all in music. So I did a music undergraduate degree and then I specialized in psychology of music and at that time, did a project on how young children respond emotionally to music And then I

sort of thought that I wanted to stay in research but I wasn't really sure. And so I started to look around for research assistant jobs and then started to work at the Royal College of Music where I still am. And once I started working in research, I realized that that was what I wanted to do. So then I did a PhD alongside working and in around 2010 started to sort of specialize in music and well-being, music and mental health.

SP04: From two sides of the coin first in terms of how music supports people's being in society obviously, but also how we look after musicians health and well-being within that complex and sort of ecology. So that's been the focus of my research sort of 13 or 14 years. Now the work in maternal and parental being happened slightly later. I was working with my Dr. Professor, Daisy Fancourt. I should say. And we sort of been chatting for a while about how interesting it would be to look at music in the postnatal period. I just had my first baby and I think it was all very kind of fresh in our minds.

SP04: And then a funding opportunity came along and we just sort of went for it and we were very fortunate and got that funding which allowed us to do our first project on singing and post-natal depression, which we can perhaps chair more about. And from there that when we saw such great results from that project and I could see from being on the ground the potential benefits for people...

R: Yeah.

Rosie: who are taking part. And so from there, it's sort of Come an increasing part of my focus. So I just a few weeks ago, submitted an edited book, manuscript to Oxford University,...

R: What?

SP04: Press on music and parental mental well-being.

R: Wow.

SP04: So that will be

SP04: Published probably 2024, realistically next year.

R: Okay.

SP04: Probably, and we've also just got funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council for a new network in this area which will be launching in October. So it's now becoming this sort of pillar central point of my work for many reasons, I think. You can look at the reasons from both the sort of health and maternal side and from the music side, there are clear needs for parents, they're not always able to be met through standards sort of treatments or support pathways. And it makes so much sense from a musical point of view because so many caregivers will be musical with their infants and their children. so there's this sort of lovely symmetry in looking at it from 360 degree perspective of everyone who's potentially involved. So,

SP04 That's the short version of sort of how to what I'm doing now.

R: Nice. Yeah, one of your articles. What? draw me into that direction because I started looking my previous. Thesis at positive depression and

Especially where I come from is such a Sigma such there is no awareness at all. and especially when then is connected to music and singing and That drove me illuminated money. But in a way because I always been interested in singing for health and it's such a huge Field, but because especially no. Again in Italy, there is such little knowledge about it. Then I've decided to take it the path and trying to see...

R: what I could do to.: to make a support and research a bit more and How important in your opinion and for what you have seen and how important is the maternal will be for the overall health. And development of the mother and also for the infant.

SP04: I mean, I think there's a lot that we could discuss here, I think The,...the literature shows us that mental and physical illness are very interrelated. So mental well-being of the parent of the mum is important, not only for their psychological being but also for their physical So there's that aspect of it. And obviously physical being is very important in the postnatal period in particular because you're recovering from pregnancy and birth. So there's even more imperative for all of that to be sort of look.

R. Yeah.

SP04: Obviously, the implications of illnesses such as postnatal depression, or post natal psychosis. The implications in terms of the mum's general being, a huge. It can be completely debilitating for some people, just it can cause struggles with day-to-day. Living, the things that have to be done, can cause struggles with caregiving with feeling connected with your baby. All of these different things that are so important.

it's also expensive for other state for the country to look after people with these illnesses. So there's that sort of imperative as well. Not that we need any more reasons, but there's that sort of imperative as well. to look after people's mental health. I think. there's also a lot of evidence, although it is Quite a confused evidence base, but that is evidence about how things like postnatal depression can then impact on the infant and the child. And there is some evidence that suggests, it can affect Emotional psychological development. But also, there's evidence to suggest that positive parenting strategies can stop that from happening. I think it's scary. If you're a parent with podenal depression, it's scary to be told not only are you ill but your illness might also affect your baby like that makes it even worse.

R. It's the worst. Yeah.

SP04: yeah, so I think it's important in the messaging to be really clear that if it's untreated and unresolved, then yes, it might impact on the baby other children, but actually it can be treated, there is support for people, although it can be challenging to access that but also, how you parent can change the outcomes. It's not necessarily you have both needle depression there for your infant is going to experience developmental delays or emotional delays or whatever.

SP04: So, I think it's important that we recognize the impact obviously on babies and children, but it's also important that we recognize what we can do to support parents to get better, and to parents, so that doesn't happen. And also, to recognize how scary it would be. as a parent with PND to be told that this might be also affecting your baby. That's not going to help with all the feeling it Andy. Yeah.

R.Yeah.: It's is already a vulnerable moment and period of time. We don't want to be told you will make things even worse for your baby and Create issues or...

SP04: Yeah. Yeah.

R: Do you believe there are any correlations between the maternal would being and the parent infant bond?

SP04: Yeah, so I research hasn't looked at this sort of specifically some of the studies.

R.Okay.

SP04: One of the studies, that Daisy. And I did looked at how close mums feel. They are to their baby. So sort of perceived closeness, And we compared to just single sessions of coming along and singing, or coming along and chatting, and we found that the mums in the singing group, reported a bigger increase, or felt more connected, or close to their baby. So, That's just One example that sort of points towards How singing and music can support the connection, whether or not. That's the bond itself. Is maybe a little more complex to get up, but this feeling of being close. And I know there's other work that has started to look at this and I think evidence would generally suggest.

00:10:00

Rosie: Believe that her singing can help people to feel connected to the people generally and can help parent infant bond. And babies, we know will respond to their parents' voice will mirror that sort of vocal intonation and all of this stuff. so, yes, I think there is evidence that there are connections or correlations between being, singing music and infant bond closeness.

brunella govetto: Yeah.

brunella govetto: What role do you believe, creative activities in this case, singing and music. Can play promoting maternal of being. And be a support.

Rosie: Gosh, there's so much I could say here. I think.

brunella govetto: Even though I don't.

Rosie: So, I've already sort of come into that In my last response.

brunella govetto: Yeah. It's okay.

Rosie: I've bought the music in. Sorry, I think that wasn't your question. What I couldn't? I just automatically so, I think the first thing is that, It provides creative space for people to be. It's not necessarily a clinical space or a therapeutic space. It's a creative space and I think that is really important and the moms that we've worked with over the years have told us That it felt really good. Not to be going to something with a doctor or something with a therapist, but we're going to something in the community with other people who were experiencing similar things. You didn't have to talk about it. You could if you wanted to but you didn't have to and I think all of that sets the context for why you've created activities can support eternal being. I think there are more specific mechanisms as well that come into play.

Rosie: With The first study that isy. And I did, we spoke to the parents lemons about What they felt during the sessions and why they felt that possessions might have supported. Their well-being. And we compared again,...

brunella govetto: Yeah.

Rosie: singing with sort of creative play and chatting. And there were lots of things that were the same, being with minded people having a sense of structure, but what stood out for the creative singing activities was the sort of emotional psychological enablers of About things that might be quite difficult to talk about. You might even not know how you're feeling, but being able to sort of make music with other people. Express some of this stuff in a safe environment. The mum said that it was quite absorbing. So, it gave him a bit of

Rosie: Distraction or respite from other things, they might be worrying about. That it gave them me time which it's really hard. When you have a new baby you don't get much time to yourself. That it was a way of being creative, which again is not always easy when you're also caring for a baby 24/7. So, These sort of psycho, emotional mechanisms of Identity, building creative expression. All of that I think is part of why creative activities can support maternal well-being.

R-: Moment.

SP04: I think it's also important to say that it doesn't for everyone so it's not always the right thing for people. for example, we did a recent study where we were working online with women who had postnatal depression and loneliness. And this was a songwriting project and we found that overall the experimental group had much better. Reductions in postnatal, depression and loneliness than the control group, but some of the women said, it's quite difficult to come. And Join a group where we're singing about motherhood and identity. Because I just don't want to think about that. I don't want to think about my identity.

brunella govetto: wow.

Rosie: I don't want to think about all this stuff, I want to escape from that. so, I,

Rosie: Although I'm a complete advocate for the music and singing in maternal. I also think we need to be really careful not to assume that it's For everyone, not that it's not necessarily going to be the right thing for everyone and for some people It might be difficult if you're in a songwriting group and the group is writing a song that doesn't sit well with you, it doesn't make sense for that could actually be quite an isolating experience, potentially. So I think. Any complex intervention it is really complex. It's really individual and...

SP04- subjective and people will Experience it in different ways. so, I think That's an important thing for us to reflect on as well,...

R,Yeah.

SP04.: within all of this.

R.: just things came up to my mind now. You mentioned working in group could be beneficial. We've seen that it was beneficial in what way?

SP04: I think there are a lot of social things going on there. So, being expected somewhere at a certain time, with other people, who would notice, if you weren't there, I

think the sense of sharing a creative experience with other people was really important. and the workshop leaders that we were working with were Really skilled in allowing the group to make quite complex music quite quickly. So, just through things such as sort of, maybe a little bit of harmony or a little bit of rounds. Maybe a little bit of a complement, from another person in the room, all of that could make the musical products. complex quite quickly, which meant that people felt a sense of ...: Being in a group, creating something bigger than themselves, a sense of accomplishment. I'm contributing to this really nice sound. That's making me feel good. I think all of that feeds in. I think being around people that, are experiencing something similar to, you is also an important part of it. So that's not related to the music or the singing specifically. But being put together with other people who have shared experiences, I think, is definitely part of it. And more generally, we know that people get a real sense of social connectedness from US arts and cultural activities. So it helps people to connected to feel emotionally for other people and all of that sort of stuff and it can help bonding as well. Just being shown in other studies, we kind of touched on that earlier. So I think all of those things feed into the group aspect.

SP04: Being important as well.

R.Yeah, yeah. And there was another thing,

SP04 From what I've seen here in Italy. where there is no absolutely awareness, but What do you think, the creative interventions like, singing a music like we said, or not play whatever and therapeutic interventions because I don't know. What situation that UK.

R: And if you look for help, do they suggest straight? They said the switch addressing easy.

Rosie: Who.

SP04: Therapeutic, or is there a window opening for also? The create creative intervention?

Rosie: Do you hear me? Okay, I just got a little thing saying that my Internet was unstable. Is it okay? Yeah,....

SP04: And So I haven't done any research. Comparing, create interventions with therapeutic interventions. I think, in the UK, the normal sort of roots of treatment would be antidepressant, medication or psychological therapies. So things like positive behavioral therapy group, or individual, and those are big and main pathways for postnatal depression, unless it was severe, and then a patient would be taken to a mother and baby unit in hospital. But the community-based person depression. Those are the main treatments.

We are beginning to see some referrals into creative interventions now. So we have social prescribing in some places,...

R: Yeah.

SP04: in the UK, Some of the music initiatives that exists for parents are also available on prescription now. So singing mamas For example they have a program that's now just starting to be available on prescription melodies for mums, which is a program that grew out of the research. I was describing with Daisy, that program. Now also can have referrals from health professionals so, I'm definitely not an expert in that sort of area, but my sense is that it's beginning to happen, but in very small local. Pockets. So it's not the case that any woman going to their doctor with postnatal depression would have the option of a creative activity but

SP04: That is a movement sort of, in that direction, in some parts of the UK. I think that's a fair sort of reflection of where we're at. I think.

R: Are there? Any characteristics that. May contribute to I want to say maybe it's such a big word, but effectiveness of thinking workshops to support my tenement.

SP04: Yes. Yes. I think the main one is The musical leader. I or...at least maybe one of the main ones we've seen time and time again. How that person is so important to creating a sense of safety to making sure that it's inclusive bottom-up, led by the people who are there. The people feel it's authentic so they can bring whatever music they like or they know into the space. All of that is important and...

R: Okay.

SP04: a lot of the participants in our projects have talked about the connection. They feel with some of them carried on going to other activities that the leader was doing in the community afterwards. There's this real sense of connection but also the leaders are so skilled in being able to create that safety for people.

SP04: and allowing the creative work to happen in a way that everyone can join in with. Or not, if they're not happy they don't feel like that way and facilitating that sense of involvement and belonging and achievement for everyone in the space. Because especially for people with illnesses, like those little depression, it could be really, really hard just to have simply got to the session So, being able to read that and to respectfully bring people in and hold them in the group. I think that's one of the most important things. And I touched on the inclusivity. I think the music.

SP04: Needs to come from the people in the room, not on the leader. So the leader might have some ideas of course and we'll bring some of those. But also, really taking ideas from the people in the room. We've had people bringing lullabies that they were song from all around the world, different countries, different cultures and that if that sense of ownership and belonging and of learning as well. Because then everyone in the group is learning something different or new for them, so I think that's another Sort of important mechanism if you like route to effectiveness. I think another one is that the sessions are for the mums. Or for the parents depending on who's involved? Because there's a lot of music groups in the UK that are mainly for babies so long and...

R Yeah.

SP04: help your baby to develop, whatever that oral scores, or the motor skills or whatever.: But I think these sessions, it's for the moms. and that links in my previous points that, it's music that makes sense to the mums. It's time for the months and yes of course, the baby's a part of that but it's first and foremost for the moms, I think that's another really important. Sort of hallmark. Of the work that I've seen that there is effective.

R: Based on what you have seen or experienced.

What are the potential barriers or challenges that a mother might face participating in a workshop? Maybe. But there are two sides of this. One is like getting to the workshop and then the other side is actually the participation part. I think is to distinguish. Things.

SP04 Yeah, I agree. So we've already touched on the difficulties of getting, I...

SP04: if you have An illness like postnatal depression, it can be incredibly difficult to even want to get out of bed in the morning and to be able to do the basic caregiving routines. And I think If you don't have postnatal depression, it can be very difficult to get somewhere on time when you're also looking after a baby because maybe they need a feed or maybe they need to change or maybe they're unsettled that day or teething. So just the logistics of having a young baby and maybe older children as well. just simply being at somewhere to certain time can be really hard, then if you have potential depression, that's even harder and then if you live somewhere where there's not good transport links or you don't have a car, It's even harder.

00:25:00

Rosie: If you have to pay for the sessions, that could be a barrier for people as well. So, people can't afford to do it. So there's all of that that happens before you even get there. I think another thing that can stop people from getting, there is the sense that they're not musical music isn't for me, Obviously, I don't believe that I think it's for everyone but I think people feel that it might not be for them. if they don't regularly make music or sing, It might not feel like something that is achievable for them. And so I think it's so important when we Offer and talk about These sorts of groups that we're very clear in anyone as welcome to come and all no levels of musical experience or...

R: Yeah.

SP04: interest at our welcomed in that space. So, I think those are some of The barriers.

I'm just trying to think back to what participants have told us. I think in the sessions themselves, it can feel difficult for people if their baby is unsettled. So if their baby is crying Like they said, they need a nappy change in the middle that can feel hard for participants. And so, the leaders that we've worked with, do a lot of work to say, it's absolutely fine

babies cry. That's what happens. You're welcome, don't worry. You don't have to leave, to really trying to normalize. The fact that babies need a lot of care and they might not always be quiet,...

SP04: So I think all of that can be a barrier.

: But I do think the one about, I'm not musical or it's not for me is a really big one. And I think,...

SP04: we need to think about How we talk about it we're from the Royal College of Music and people have certain views on that. What music might mean Put in an institution such

Rosie: So, it's important that we're able to articulate, this very wide inclusive, definition of music

R: Yeah, I can't sing free...

SP04: Yeah. Exactly.

R: for the purpose of my research that I have to do online for personal reason. I reach out to communities forums on Internet and I received a few responses and I did make clear that, no singing. experience was required and I got a couple of responses and I think one of there are many reasons why I didn't get thousands of emails, but I think one little reasons exactly that the feel of being

R: I'm not saying but afraid of singing with other people. and might have been one of the reasons and...

R: it's normal even for people who are not like mothers, it's the same thing, We have such an idea from and we can blame TV, we can blame on the voice or American idols. thinking is not even though if we're not professional, we Cannot sing. And

SP04: Yeah. Yeah, definitely.

R: Let me see if. yeah. could you share? An anecdote. What are you witnessed? Or maybe you didn't, pretty sure you did. The positive impact of singing. on maternal being or...

R: even Feedback or Anything.

SP04: Yeah, gosh, this again so many examples. I'm trying to think a good one for you. when we did the first project, we made a little video, we recorded some of the sessions of people who are happy to be on the camera and we are some of them What it meant to them to come to the project and there's this one woman who always stays in my mind. And she was there on the camera with her little baby. And she said, It's just the fact that someone is waiting for me. Someone will know If I'm going to be here, And someone will care about that.

and it's always stuck with me, for two reasons, first of all, because she was so intense in the way she said it, and second because she didn't mention the music specifically, And I've always wondered.

SP04: It's always made me wonder and had this drive sort of further research is. music is not always social, but music is often social. And so, how do we zentangle all of this? Does it matter? Maybe it doesn't matter.

: Her comment. Just always has stayed in my mind because it was so heartfelt. so she really cared that we were there every week that we had whether she came or not, and then there's another example that that's more music specific that again has always stuck with me and I don't think this one made it into the video but I remember them talking about it and this mum had a very premature baby. And the baby had been sort of on, and off, for a long time, and they spent quite a lot of time in hospital.

SP04: She came along to the group seeing sessions. and then she told us at the end of the project, that When her baby had been very distressed in the hospital in the middle of the night. She was on her own with the baby, she would use some of the songs that we had learned together to sing to the baby and To help. Calm them, both down. Bring a different noise into the room. And that gave her a sense of being able to do something. It is

a situation where actually, a lot of the time, she didn't really feel. That she had the power to do anything because her baby was on well, and doctors were in charge and all of that. And so that example, always sticks with me as well. Really being able to.

: To transfer the benefits out of the session themselves, there's being there, being expected and being part of a group and doing something together and then there's what happens the rest of the time. and I think, That's a really powerful anecdote of how. this can, Filter out into other aspects. Of life. Which really difficult for some new parents. And if your baby's in and out of hospital, that's really hard. and so, having some songs and some music to be able to slightly change. How that feels is a good example, I think.

R: Yeah. Yeah. I mean we grew up with such an idea of, having a baby, everything's perfect. And I will be happy and...

SP04: Really, what?

R-my baby will be healthy but Life.

SP04: Absolutely 100%. I mean like you said at the beginning there's so much stigma around all of this. The idea that it's not perfect that you don't instantly have that rush of love for your baby and...

SP04: everything is great and they're sleeping through the night after six weeks, it's really difficult. For a lot of people. Yeah.

R: I think the last two questions. Sorry and so,

: What are Some key areas to believe. Do you believe need or...

SP04: Yeah.

R: require sorry, further research in this field? Or maybe I'll be happy. Also to hear what you project are now is regarding the role of singing or music and maternal was being

SP04: so, I think one of the main things we need to do is work out how we can move from lots of small, local projects, To a wider scale implementation of this provision. For

everyone who has had a baby. And so going back to our earlier conversation about social, prescribing and that sort of thing. There's so much, amazing work that happens. A lot of it has to stop because it's dependent on project funding or a lot of it only happens in one area of the country. So I think the next step is a sort of implementation science.

: How do we take evidence informed practice and make it larger scale and sustainable? And as a project being led by Kings and UCL at the moment, sort of scaling up arts and health interventions, How do you turn an intervention that's been developed into something that's on a bigger scale? So I think that's a really really important step.: I think more work about the mechanisms. Music, singing and Whether that's improved positive symptoms or reduced to negative symptoms. What are the pathways And that,...

this psychological pathways the social emotional the physiological. So, there are research teams looking at hormone response, for example, oxytocin. And this sort of thing. What is it that might make a difference because that helps us to then make sure that we can recreate those active ingredients, to make sure that there are benefits I think another thing is, Diversifying a little bit. and most of the works has been maternal but I think we could look more widely other types of parents as well. Fathers partners, grandparents, Because it's a family unit.

And all sorts of different family types, There's normally multiple people.

: Parents the baby or two parents and a baby, or a parent, and a grandparent, and a baby. So thinking about that sort of Family group unit will be important as well.

I think also in terms of diversity, thinking about representation in terms of who's leading, this sort of work, who's involved in this sort of work, where it doesn't happen, and why it doesn't happen. All of those things are really important as to that I think the main sort of areas that I've been thinking about in terms of future work,

R And the last one is mainly more. Suggested not for me. So basically, if you could suggest and you would recommend any guidelines or songs or exercises for singing workshops with moms Or.

SP04 Interesting, I think, what I would recommend is being Incredibly open about what that might look like. so, learning from the people in the room, rather than starting with too many ideas of our own, And that's what I see to be really effective. So, In the more recent project I was telling you about with songwriting, just getting people talking about their week, what they love about their baby, what things they want for their baby and then using that to create some lyrics. And then just allowing one of our music leaders, just plays a few chords and their ukulele and allows people to try out different melodies and people are surprisingly up for doing that. And so, allowing the music to come from the mums. Feels really important. however, of course, we want to start somewhere and I think what I've seen from the music, these is that

: coming in with songs and lullabies. From all different, kind of global locations is also really important so being really diverse in the choice of music. helps to make people involved that they belong and also give that sense like I was saying of sort of we're learning today about Sofia and what music Sophia likes all. We're learning today about Jessica and what music Jessica likes and that I think is important as well. So that might not answer the question quite in the way that you intended, that that's sort of my initial response to it.

R: No, no absolutely absolutely wonderful. Yeah.

Trying to think I said two questions. if you had any Suggestions at all. So I will Conduct these workshops with mothers and then I will interview them at the end. and mainly will be like politic TV qualitative data? Sorry.

SP04: Right. Yeah.

And do you have any tips for me if there will be to capture if there was any evidence that Workshop was helped in a way a mother.

SP04: Yeah. Yeah, I would suggest that you keep your questions really open. So try not to lead the participants,...and you could use techniques. Such as you think, back to before, we had our workshop. How are you feeling? How was day to day for you and now tell me what that's like now, And then you could ask you, What do you think might have contribute

if there's a change, What do you think? Might have contributed and see whether they suggest that the workshops and the singing. And then once they have suggested it then of course you can ask more specific questions. what does it feel like for What did you enjoy, what felt good for you, But I think try Not to assume at first that it will have been beneficial try and allow that to come from them. Because then, the qualitative research will be so much higher quality if you're able to simply ask them how they are generally and where the music fits in with that.

R: Yeah. Yeah.

SP04 That's much more persuasive than a question that tell me what was good for you about the workshops. Because they might think actually, No, it wasn't. You mean if you get what I mean? So trying to have really open questions, talking about them as people as humans and then trying to understand where the music workshops are fitted in with, that would be my advice.

R: Okay, Thank you for,...

SP04 Welcome.

R: for your time and everything you shared with me. And

SP04: my pleasure, the stipulation form, I sent that

R: Yes, I've seen it. I would Sent it back to you. So yeah.

SP04: Perfect. ...

R Thank you so much it's been

SP04: you're really welcome and best of luck with the study and please do stay in touch.

R Thank you so much. Everyone will thank you.

SP04: But things please do. In fact, if you're interested, I can add you To the mating list for the new network that we're setting up. Yeah, I'll do that.

R Yeah, yeah. Thank you.

SP04: And then you receive information.

R: Yeah. amazing,...

SP04 Great. Thank you.

R: thank you so much, and for your time,...

Sp04: Very nice to speak with you. Bye.

APPENDIX 10: SINGING WORKSHOPS PLAN

MELODIES OF MOTHERHOOD: INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF SINGING ON MATERNAL WELL-BEING AND PARENT-INFANT RELATIONSHIP

Songs:

Bill Withers: Lean on me

Lily Allen: Somewhere only we know

Danielle Hope: Somewhere over the rainbow

Aly Harpert: Loosen baby

Elton John :Your song

Noa: We

Adele: make you feel my love

Abba: Dancing queen

Christina Perry: You are my sunshine

Twinkle twinkle little star

Workshop Structure: 45 Minutes

Workshop 1:

Introduction and Icebreaker (5 minutes):

- Meet and greet
- Talk about research-importance of singing
- Introduce your self

Warm up

- Head shoulders roll
- Breathing exercise
- Little mmm, uuu

Somewhere only we know

Twinkle Twinkle

Welcome participants and introduce yourself.

Share a brief overview of the workshop's goals and objectives.

Begin with a light icebreaker activity to help participants get to know each other, fostering a sense of community.

Breathing Exercises (10 minutes):

Begin with a brief explanation of the importance of deep breathing for relaxation and stress reduction.

Lead participants through a series of simple breathing exercises:

Imagine the air is of your favourite colour

Inhale deeply for a count of four.

Hold the breath for a count of four.

Exhale slowly for a count of six.

Repeat this cycle a few times, encouraging participants to focus on their breath and let go of tension.

Warm-up Activities (10 minutes):

Humming exercises to activate vocal cords and warm up the vocal range.

Gentle vocal sirens (ascending and descending sounds) to further warm up the voice.

- Lean on me

Guided Reflection and Sharing (5 minutes):

Reflection on how they felt during the activity.

Share any insights or emotions they experienced while singing.

Closing and Connection (5 minutes):

Thank participants for their participation

Remind them of the upcoming workshops and encourage them to continue exploring the benefits of singing.

Suggest songs you like to sing

Workshop 2:

Breathing and Icebreaker (5 minutes):

Breathing exercises: Deep inhales and exhales, focusing on relaxation.

Icebreaker: Participants share their favourite songs briefly.

Light stretching to release tension in the neck, shoulders, and jaw.

Breathing exercises

Warm-up Activities (10 minutes):

- Loosen baby

Participants share how singing made them feel.

Closing and Connection (5 minutes):

Share one word to define today- share a word from the text that resonated with you today

Workshop 3: Getting Started

Breathing and Icebreaker (5 minutes):

Breathing exercises: Deep inhales and exhales, focusing on relaxation.

Icebreaker: Participants share their favourite songs briefly.

Light stretching to release tension in the neck, shoulders, and jaw.

Breathing exercise- shhhh

Warm-up Activities (10 minutes):

- Dancing queen
- Loosen baby

Participants share how singing made them feel.

Closing and Connection (5 minutes):

Share one word to define today- share a word from the text that resonated with you today

Workshop 4:

Breathing and Icebreaker (5 minutes):

Breathing exercises: Inhale for 4 counts, exhale for 6 counts.

Icebreaker: Participants share their favourite genres of music.

Warm-up Activities (10 minutes):

Icebreaker: Participants share their favourite songs briefly.

Light stretching to release tension in the neck, shoulders, and jaw.

Breathing exercise- shhhh

Lip trills

Humming

- Noa: We
- Adele: make you feel my love

Participants share how they connected with the lyrics.

Closing and Connection (5 minutes):

Grounding exercise

Encourage participants to continue singing outside of the workshops.

Workshop 5:

Breathing and Icebreaker (5 minutes):

Breathing exercises: Inhale for 4 counts, exhale for 6 counts.

Icebreaker: Participants share a happy memory.

Warm-up Activities (10 minutes):

Breathing exercise - shhhh zzzz

Hamming

Lip trills

Stretching and vocal warm-ups.

- Lean on me
- You are my sunshine
- Your song

Participants share their favourite parts of the workshop.

Closing and Connection (5 minutes):

5 senses exercises

Remind participants of the supportive community.

Workshop 6:

Last workshop

Sing together the songs learnt during the sessions and ask participants which one they preferred and why

- Lean on me
- Loosen baby
- Make you feel my love
- You are my sunshine
- Somewhere only we know
- Your song

Relaxing exercises

Begin deep breathing while sitting or standing in a calm place. As you breathe, imagine a strong, beautiful, steady tree. Imagine stepping into this tree, where your arms become the branches, your body is the trunk of the tree, and your legs and feet become the root system. Picture yourself in this tree and feel the strength and support of the trunk and roots. Shift your attention to your breath. Breathing in strength from the sky and universe through the branches. Breathing out and releasing distress through your roots to the earth and the ground under your feet. Continue to breathe feeling your body, be steady, and at ease. Picture yourself stepping out of the tree, feeling calm, connected, and grounded.

Getting ready

Imagine yourself as a tree.

If it is comfortable, stand with feet planted on the ground.

If you are outside, you can take off your shoes to feel more connected with the earth. You can also sit or lie down for this grounding meditation.

Imagine your back as a trunk and that you have long roots that grow from the bottom of your feet, deep into the Earth.

Take a moment to scan your body, noticing any areas of tension. You may wish to gently realign your body so you are in a relaxed position.

Firstly we will take a deep breath in through the nose, feeling our lungs expand.

Then let it all out with a big exhale, imagining all the energy you were hanging on to is flowing out of your body, down through your roots, and into the Earth.

Close your eyes. Breathe deeply in through your nose, and exhale through your mouth, focusing on the sound of your breath and the bodily sensations of breathing.

Stay with it. Use your breathing to focus you and help you slow down your body's internal activity.

Grounding

You are standing in an open field with the sun shining down upon you. You are tall, strong, and solid. You are old and wise.

Bring awareness to your feet and first notice them in contact with the ground. Now feel them firmly anchored to the ground.

Now imagine strong roots extending from the bottoms of your feet, pushing downward through the surface below, eventually reaching into the soil below.

Feel your roots reaching even deeper into the earth, winding around rocks, and pushing deep through the many layers of cool, dark earth. Your roots grow and spread both downward and outward.

Feel yourself anchored very solidly to the ground by your extensive root system.

As you become more anchored, feel your tree-body, your trunk, straight and strong. Feel your leafy branches extend upward toward the warm sun.

Letting go of stress

As you are breathing, imagine with each exhale, that you are pushing any tension or stress down toward your feet and out through your roots into the surrounding soil.

Feel tension draining from your eyes, your jaw, your shoulders, your chest, your belly, and all areas of your body.

Notice how receptive the Earth is and how the ground absorbs what you want to release. Feel grateful and lighter as you begin to “clear”.

Breathing in feelings of wellbeing

When you feel properly grounded, take a deep breath and reverse the process.

You will now absorb healing and calming energy from the Earth.

As you breathe in through your nose, imagine with each breath that your roots are absorbing healing white light.

Feel the rich nutrients of the Earth gently feeding your root system until it reaches the trunk of your body. Feel the light entering your legs, your stomach, your chest, your arms, hands and finally your head.

Be aware of this sense of oneness with the earth.

Feel this grounded, earthly energy fill your body, washing over you with feelings of wellbeing.

Feel the sun shining down on your tree-body, and know that with each ray of sunshine, you have the ability to create your own energy.

Take a moment to step back from yourself and look at the tree. See how you are one with the earth, and one with the sky – solid, steady and expansive.

You are able to both sway with the breeze and be connected and grounded.

When you are ready, gently come back to the here and now, carrying the grounded energy of the tree with you through the rest of the day.

APPENDIX 11: SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW 2

1. How are you feeling?
2. How did you feel about your participation in the singing workshops? Were there any moments or aspects that stood out to you?
3. What did you enjoy?
4. Has the inclusion of singing into your daily life affected you? (wellbeing)
5. Were there any specific songs or singing exercises that resonated with you? and why?
6. During or after the workshops, have you noticed any changes personally? have you noticed any shifts in your overall emotional wellbeing?
7. Do you feel that singing had any effects on you? And what about on the relationship with your baby and your ability to connect with your baby emotionally?

8. How do you currently feel about taking care of your baby's needs? Has this changed since participating in the singing workshops?
9. Have the singing workshops helped you to create a nurturing environment for your baby? Have you noticed any changes?
10. Share a glimpse of your daily routine. How has it evolved since you started attending the workshops? Have you incorporated any new practices or activities into your daily routine considering both your well-being and your relationship with your baby ?
1. how singing has become a part of your daily routine with your child? Did the workshops encourage you to sing more with your child?
11. How do you feel when you engage in singing with your baby now, compared to before the workshops? have you seen any changes in the way your baby responds to your singing?
12. Have you observed any changes in your overall confidence in caring for your baby and respond to his needs, after participating in the singing workshops?
13. Discuss your perspective on your baby's development and the bond between you and your baby. Have you noticed any changes since participating in the singing workshops?
14. Have the singing workshops influenced your idea of singing as a tool for enhancing your emotional well-being? Can you describe your feelings towards singing?
15. Thinking about your experience with the singing workshops, what aspects of the workshops had the most significant impact on you as a mother? How have these aspects influenced your relationship with your baby and your overall well-being?
16. Were there any challenges you faced during the workshops?
17. Would you suggest to other mothers to consider singing workshops?
18. Is there anything else you would like to add or share about your journey?

APPENDIX 12: SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW 2 TRANSCRIPTS

Semi structured interview 2

P01

P01 All right. How are you?

R I'm okay. How are you?

P01 Yeah, not too bad this morning,
Just a bit. Let me just get him out and turn his telly down. Sorry, Lizzie. You've got to turn down
your cookie jar. Oh,
No, he hasn't been up. He didn't sleep too well. He's been like a bit of a pickle at night sometimes.

R Sorry. And how are you feeling?

P01 It's all right. Just, you know, it's just one of those times of year when everyone's got colds and
coughs and, you know, you just end up catching everything, don't you? So,

R My God!

I saw it on the screen, I was like, what is that?

P01 Sorry, it's just the baby playing with the door. I saw it way like, Well, that's what he does. Sometimes he'll open and close the door and I'll see it in the corner of my eye. And I think, oh God. This house.

R Ghosts everywhere? Not today.
Though, it's supposed to be Halloween.

P01 Yeah, I believe in it all anyway, so I'm sure there must be ghosts and whatever.

R Yeah, I used to work in a theatre. And we had to lock up at the end of the night at 11 midnight, you know, and it wasn't a nice experience when everybody left.

P01 I'm sure they exist.

Though, because I'm a bit witchy, Wiccan kind of, you know, I, you know, light candles and whatever and do kind of Wiccany stuff, you know,
So I do believe in it. I believe they're all over the place.

R Oh yeah, no, absolutely.

P01 That's why sometimes my cats, they just stare. In a corner. And I'm like,
Okay, something's right.

R They do have a perception of what's happening.

P01 Yeah, they do.

R It can't be different. I feel like they're in their own world. So thank you for today. I will try not to ask you too many questions. It's just.

As feedback from everything we've done and to type it up. About this stuff. And if I use any quotes, obviously, your name will not be mentioned,

R You will not appear at all. Okay. Okay, so first question. How did you feel about taking part in the singing workshops? Were there any moments that you liked that stood out to you that you enjoyed particularly?

P01 You know what, it's funny because before having Nazir, I used to do like obviously choir and all those kind of stuff. So it's like, it was nice to be part, do something singing-ish again. Because when you have a baby, you're, in a weird way, you don't, you lose who you are. You just become mum. And then when people talk to you, they'll go, how's baby? They don't ask how you are. They don't, you know, so it was nice to do it. You know, because it just kind of reminded me how much I love music, you know, how much I enjoyed my instrument.

I haven't, you know, since this thing, I've actually got my ukulele out again. I hadn't got my ukulele out since he was born, you know? So it was like, it just reminded me like, oh, you know, I do like music and I can play instruments, you know? So that was good.

R Creepy, creepy thing.

P01 S It's just the bib. I'll just ignore him.

R If you see me going like, That's because I just see the door moving by itself.

P01 Yeah, the door. Oh dear, as a child.

R Nice, nice, nice. And do you feel that singing in this period of time that we've had together had any effect on you in general?

P01 Yeah, no, I do. I think it just, it made me remember kind of to not get caught up in these nursery rhymes. You know, because, you know, obviously it's hard, it's easy to just sing Twinkle Twinkle Little Star all the time, or it's easy, you know, because he watches while I'm busy cleaning, he'll watch these, it's called Super Simple Songs. I don't know if you've ever heard of it. It's like a billion dollar YouTube thing, but he loves it. While I'm cleaning and cooking, it keeps him quiet.

You know, but when I'm in the, you know, it's kind of reminded me that, you know, I don't have to listen to that all day. You know, so I've started to put like, you know, when he's not watching it, put on smooth radio or when we're in the kitchen together, I'm putting on, you know, Kistry or something, you know, because I want him to know different music as well. You know, but I think I just got caught up in the whole nursery rhymes and it drives you mad. And if it drives you mad, you get bored of singing it and it filters onto them, doesn't it?

Yeah. Yeah,

R No, no, it does, it does. Were there any songs that you liked in particular or exercises that we did?

P01 Yeah, obviously I loved the Elton John one, I love Elton John. I liked the Adele one, because I don't often like Adele actually, funnily enough. She's got a brilliant voice, but I just find her music a bit like, you know... I think she's got such an amazing voice, she could probably do a bit more with her, you know, a bit more different kind, anyway. But actually it was nice singing it because it was nice, but obviously I enjoyed the Elton John and the Lean On Me is one of my favourites because I used to sing that to him anyway.

R You know.

R Yeah, again I feel regarding Adele, it's because her character was built like that, in a depressive and sad way. And I think when the world knows you like that, it's difficult to get out. She's done a bit stuff, but...

P01 Yeah, but it's still very victim-y. I always find her songs are like, you know, either she's a victim or she's unhappy or... I.

R Know, I know. And... Do you feel that... Do you think that the singing also had an effect on the relationship with the baby as well during these weeks?

P01 Yeah, I mean, I've always sung to him anyway. So, and the thing is, I think it was a bit, I don't know, I don't know how old Margaret's kids were, but I know, is it Jo? Her kids, her baby's a month or so now, isn't. So,

P01 Whereas Nazir is 10 months old, getting him to sit sometimes, you know, because at the moment he's been crawling up and down, pushing this door up and down since we've even been talking, you know, We do think there's a bit of ADHD in him, I'm sure, because daddy's ADHD. I'm sure he's got it. So you know it's like trying to engage him in singing because he does love he will he's into everything he loves music so this is you know but also I felt it was more for the my bump as well because obviously I forget I'm pregnant sometimes I completely forget until she kicks or until I nearly wet myself or because you do, you forget, because I'm so busy with him and then I'm also full-time uni as well and then I've got 100 animals I'm looking after plus my brother who's severely autistic so I look after him once or twice a week but he's like 21, he's huge, non-verbal,

He does a lot of rocking and flapping it was nice to kind of just, even if I wasn't holding him, to hold my bump and just remember that there is another one on the way, you know, and I could connect there because it is important to connect with your bump, you know.

R Oh yeah, no, absolutely, from the beginning.

P01 So that was what was important, Just, you know, putting everything aside just to sit and remember I'm still, you know, dragging along.

R Wonder Woman, Jesus. Okay.

P01 There's a lot going on I know that's why I'm always tired but you know. My brother's good though as long as he's got a Pepsi Max and a packet of crisps he's alright. He doesn't want anything from me other than that.

R That's a good one. I forgot what I am. Have you? Ohh yeah, in terms of, you know, the you, you, I'm trying to, what I'm trying to do is trying to remember your answers from before, the questions that I asked months ago and trying to see how if if singing made any changes or not,

Basically. And did you find, have you incorporated any extra activities in your daily routine with your baby and singing?

P01
No,

P01 I haven't. I ended up getting the ukulele out from its dusty cupboard and trying to engage him in that way. And he really enjoys it. As soon as he sees me getting it, he runs over. You know, and I think without this, I wouldn't have got it out of the cupboard. It would have just sat there and it probably would have been like another year before I thought, oh yeah, I can play that. You know, so, so it has that, that kind of sparked that to kind of get, because I do want him to be into music. I think it's really important for kids.

And I think, you know, before this, I just, as I was saying, I just got stuck into the nursery rhyme thing rather than widening his. You know, he's listening. Because they need to listen to stuff other than nursery rhymes, they really do. For my sanity.

R And have you seen any changes in the way your baby responds to your singing?

P01 Well, it's funny really, because the other day I had an assessment on him, because obviously his dad, so my husband, he's brilliant. He's a mechanic, he goes about his daily life, but he has got Asperger's, but very mild. You wouldn't have even noticed, but he's also got ADHD. So there is a chance that he'll have it too. So I had an assessment because the health is, I thought his communication was a bit behind, even though he's forward in everything. He's like crawling, almost walking.

But the more I'm doing more music with him, he started to do more babbling because normally the noises he makes, he'll either grunt at me or he'll just go like that kind of noise. He's actually in.

The last week or two, once I've been doing the more music, he's been kind of going, which is really good. I mean, he started to say mama as well, which is good. So I'm hoping that because I'm putting more effort into that one on one, it's helping him watch me, because I do a lot with him. We go out every day, we do swings, we do the park, we do stories, we do toys. But there's something different about music, isn't there? Because it's one-on-one. So I've been doing that a lot more, and I've noticed the last few days as well, he's been babbling more rather than just making noises.

R Yeah, it is a way of communication. So absolutely does help anyone to, you know, we're all different and it does make a difference absolutely. Has he as the mo um? And have you noticed any changes in your confidence in caring for the baby and responding to his needs?

P01 Yeah, I mean, even just, you know, being able to, because before, obviously, because I'm pregnant, I'm quite tired, obviously with my brother as well. But I have noticed that, you know, I have been making sure I've been putting that time aside. Right, it's music time now, you know, and I wouldn't have done that before, I don't think, you know, and as well, because I've been using the high chair a lot more in the kitchen, because I really hate high chairs. I find them really annoying because half the food, you know, I've got a lot to do anyway, let alone clean.

So I've been, you know, after doing the singing and stuff and remembering all the songs I liked, I was like, right, I'm going to go in the kitchen now and he's coming with me whether he likes it or not. You know, and it's actually made me use the high chair a lot more, put my music on, singing away to him in the kitchen while he's eating his little snacks, rather than him just eating in the lounge here with me. So that has made me kind of change my routine a bit because I realised I miss my music.

You know, music was a really big part of my life before becoming a mum. It really was. I would have my earphones in all day, going out and about. Don't do that anymore, because I can't, because I want to hear him. You know, I'd have music on in the kitchen, music on in the bath. I don't do that anymore. So it has kind of made me think, right, you know, I've got to bring myself back a bit here, because music does calm me. I have a lot of nervous energy, which causes anxiety for me, because obviously I've got a lot going on.

Even if I'm out with my brother, he's he could just run at any moment or he can just flip, he can be aggressive. Yeah, so.

R To be like a hundred percent.

P01 I do have a lot of anxiety sometimes, you know, music used to calm me and what I've noticed is if I don't have that input, the music, I do get quite anxious and I have to kind of do stuff rather than just sitting and putting music on, you know? So no, it has, it has like, you know, helped me to

think, right, you know, just, you know, I'm allowed to have my music. He doesn't have to have his all the time, you know?

R No, absolutely, yeah, no, no, no, absolutely. Last few questions, I promise. We talked a little bit about your relationship and the bond with them. We also mentioned already how singing influences you know, affects you in a way and how you feel towards singing. So I'm going to skip that, unless you want to add something.

P01 No, I think it just, you know, it's always been important to me, you know.

R In terms of the workshops, Do you have any feedback in general? Have you faced, I don't know, any challenges? Were there any kind of problems or like a feedback in general about the sessions?

P01 It's a shame more people didn't take part really because it was really good because you know it was you know it was a shame. I think it was more his routine because sometimes half two, I'm either cleaning up or not that I'd forget because I used to put an alarm on my phone, but sometimes he's sometimes a bit behind with his lunch. Some people have lunch at midday. He ain't having lunch at midday. You know, he eats breakfast, but then he's all over the place or so. You know, I think with him, his routine, you know, sometimes didn't fit with the time, which isn't anything to do with you.

It's more or less that he was either conked out in the crib or he was darting all over the place or he was having a kunami or, you know, so no, I thought, I know it was really good. I just, it was a shame that more people couldn't, you know, didn't join onto it. Cause I think a lot of people probably may have benefited from it, especially post, I know, I don't want to say the dreaded COVID word, but post COVID, you know, I've noticed a lot of people haven't got used to going out yet. You know,

R No, no, no. Absolutely,

P01 But No ruffle,

R Absolutely.

P01 They were ruffle, they were really good, the workshops and the music and the breathing exercises, all of that was really good.

R I'm glad, I'm glad, I'm glad. Would you suggest these kind of workshops to other mothers?

P01 Oh yeah, no, I was, you know, when I saw it on there, I was telling my friends at the toddler group, because I go on a Monday, in the mornings, I go to a little toddler group thing, you know, so, no, I think, I think they're really good. You know, I wish, like, because there are toddler groups, you know, there's loads of toddler groups about, and I've always wished there was something where it's like, you know, because you can't often go to somewhere that's for grownups where you can bring your babies.

It's always. Do you. Know what I mean? And like, I would love, I've always said I'd love there to be like a choir where it's, it's like a mother and baby choir. But there isn't. I've looked into it and there isn't, you know, because I've always thought that'd be just lovely where mums can just go and

have a sing song without having to, you know, necessarily be on mum duty. They'll have their babies with them if they want. But, you know, just to be able to sing without any pressure.

R I mean, this is actually the idea that I've got and what I wanted to, you know, pursue in a way to make sure and make aware that you need time for yourself. And these workshops, what I've been trying to do, even though I know it was online, was to give time to you. And obviously, it will have an effect on your relationship with the baby and everything. But it was a way of proving that, you know, You're still you and you still need to find time to have fun, to relax, to do whatever you like, And that was absolutely my idea.

And going forward, I will fight to have to, to, to, to bring that in a way. So yeah, that was absolutely my idea. Do you have anything else to add? I'm done. Do you have anything else to add? Do you want to share anything else?

P01 No, just carry on what you're doing, really, because it does help. It does help. You know, it does help when, when, you know, obviously, he's my first, and when you do become a new mum, it's really overwhelming. You think you're prepared, and you're not. You know, you know, i've spent years being tired. The tiredness doesn't bother me. It's more, it's the thing which affected me the most was I wasn't me anymore for a long time, because you've got a baby and obviously don't get me wrong, he's the most important thing in my life, but if I'm not me, how can I make him him?

I can't mould him if I can't mould myself.

And that's the way I try to do it. You know, and I'm, you know, I think I mentioned I practice Wicca, which isn't Satanism, don't worry, I'm not crazy. But I don't know if you know what Wicca is. It's like a, have you heard of Wicca? No. It's a kind of way of life. It's like an earth-loving way of life. You light candles, you go out, you kind of look at, instead of the seasons, there's a wheel of the year, which you look at the changes of the seasons.

You're very environmentally friendly, blah, blah, blah. Um.

Lots of candles which is great so. Yeah.

R Oh, I love them.

P01 So it's you know and that and when he was born that stopped I didn't light a candle for months you know and um you know it was only until like he got a bit older that I thought god you know how am I gonna make him an individual and show him all the things in the world if I'm just sitting here just So when I saw that post on Facebook, I was like, oh my God, a singing group. So it did, it really, you know, and I got excited for it, you know, because I was like, oh my God, you know, something to do, something to do that's not, you know, that's not going to the toddler group or that's not going to the library to do, you know, it was something else. So just keep on doing it.

R Glad.

P01 You know,

It does help because there are some women out there that wouldn't, wouldn't feel like, wouldn't be able to do it without help, wouldn't be able to turn themselves back into them without help.

R Oh yeah,

P01 If that. Sense.

R No, Absolutely, sometime. Yeah. Abs and also, I know that we have pros and cons regarding to doing online, but even the fact so you don't have to drive somewhere and go somewhere I think it helps a little bit even though you know there is this barrier between us yeah unfortunately Okay, nice,

P01 Definitely, but Um yeah definitely.

P01 Yeah just just keep if you ever do anything else just let me know.

R Okay.

P01bYou know so but if you but I would be yeah it would be nice around this area if there was like a

R I. Yeah.

P01 You. A mm, you know, just a, a mum community choir, just to go in, put some music on, sing, you know.

R Without any pressure, without any...

P01 No pressure, just, you know, I'm sure someone would be able to play the tinkle or piano around here and I'm sure, because I live on a council estate, so down the bottom there's like, I don't know, they do the food bank every Tuesday, so it's like a little community hall and I'm sure they'd let us, you know, they'd let somebody use it if it was for the community, do you know what I mean? And I have said to the local councillor, is there something for families just to go to, but there isn't really.

And there's no one that can run it because who wants to run it, you know? So. It does.

R It does take some effort.

P01 Yeah, it does. So I'll look out for it. But, you know, just just keep on what you're doing.

R I will be in touch. I'm sure. Do something.

P01Yeah, definitely.

R Thank you for your time.

P01 That's all right. Let me grab him so you can say goodbye. You are too big.

Semi structured interview 2

P02

P02 Hi.

R Good morning.

P02 Morning. We're a bit grumpy because we're a bit under slept.

R I'm sorry. Oh my God, I haven't... Ah, look at it. Look at the eyes. They're gorgeous. They've just got blue eyes as well, Joanna.

P02 Yeah, they're sort of bluey green, mine.

His eyes are very like his dad's.

His dad's are very blue.

R Oh, that's lucky. In my family, it was just all like blue eyes and green eyes everywhere. And just me, I just got it. I only got it. And the rest of my cousins and everyone are like very dark and brown. Yeah, I'm the only one who managed to get it. I'm sorry, we're disturbing you a little bit today. And how are you, Joanna?

P02 Yeah, I'm all right. Sleep is affecting both of us, but yeah, I'm okay. Yeah, he's doing like a longer stint at night, like he's doing a four, five hour stint, but then from like 2.30 in the morning, he just won't go down in his cot, so he sleeps on me at that point, so then you're awake, aren't you, really? So it's tough. But anyway, I'm away you chatting?

R Do you want to sing? Someone wants to sing here?

P02 Yeah. You see, he.

R Nice, nice. Yeah, I'm going to ask you just a few questions, which is more of a feedback for me to make sense of what I'm doing. And Uh,

P02 Yeah, Of course.

R And yeah, so hopefully they're not too many. Yeah, So I can let you go,

P02 No worries.

R Let you both go. Don't worry. I know you miss it. Oh my God, it's too cute. Fine. I don't have time for baby yet. So, um, okay. Um, so the first one would be, uh, how did you feel about, uh, your participations in the singing workshops? Were there any moments where you got stood out, that you particularly enjoyed?

P02 So yeah, I really enjoyed them. It was really nice to sort of carve out a bit of space to do something like that because I think otherwise the day can just fall into a run of, you know, feed, change, sleep, repeat. So I think sometimes it felt like a challenge to fit it in because, you know, if he's not in the right bit of that cycle that can be that can be tricky um but actually once if we were in the right place like this week particularly he was in the perfect place he'd just woken up he'd just been fed he was really happy and he really enjoyed the session which meant that I could more enjoy the session because he was um yeah.

R Of course of course of course and something that I actually forgot to mention sessions but it was actually really important. It was okay for them if they want to cry, it was okay for them if they want to be grumpy. We were all in that together anyway and they have the freedom anyway to do what they had to do and express how they're feeling. So that's something that I probably forgot to say and to mention during the weeks, but yeah, I'm glad.

P02 I think in some ways Zoom, Zoom is kind of not so good in some ways because it's, you can't, the delay is too difficult to really sing together, isn't it? Which is in some ways a shame, but the benefits of it are that you can mute yourself if you're having struggles and therefore, you know, if you're in a group environment, I suppose you just have to leave the room, wouldn't you? So you can mute yourself, you can still hear what's going on. You can still be singing, but actually it means that you're not kind of disturbing everybody else. And yeah, so that is the pros and cons, I think, to the setup.

R Yeah, yeah, absolutely, absolutely. And has this, like, I know you've been singing before anyway, but has this inclusion of singing affected your daily life routine in any way? Or you in any way,

P02 Well, I think yeah.

R Even yourself?

P02 The Re, you know, the reason I did it is because I found that I was naturally singing to him quite a lot. I think that's only made it more, and it's also given me more songs, so I've definitely sung the songs after the sessions. Yeah, so it's definitely included that more in our routine, for sure.

R And any songs in particular, I've written the answer already, but any songs in particular that. Resonated with you, that you particularly liked?

P02 So, Loosen Loosen Baby, I really liked that. That one was lovely. And then we've done quite a lot of Adele this week now after we've sung quite a few of her songs together. What else? Yeah, and then Somewhere Only We Know is just a lovely song. I love that song anyway. So yeah, definitely, yeah, had a bit of a thing about that one. It's quite Christmassy, that one, I think. It was on the John, you know, the John Lewis Christmas advert? Do you know that? Yeah, it was on that a couple of years ago.

R Okay.

P02 Quite nice for this time of year to sing that song as well.

R True. Oh my God. So close. I just realised that. Crazy. Let me see, let me see, let me see. And did you see any changes in you personally? Have you noticed any shifts in your well-being in general or it was the same?

P02 It's so difficult to say, Bru, because we're so early days, like everything is just changing so much all the time anyway, so I think it's very difficult to honestly say anything particularly related to that, but definitely generally singing is helpful, you know, like it just shifts something, there is something quite magical about singing that does just you know, feel so good that I'm sure it's generally been therapeutic in what is an incredibly difficult time of my life, you know, like a very big shift has happened.

So yeah, difficult to say specifically the workshops, but singing and yeah, there's just a lot going on.

R No, no, absolutely, super fair, absolutely. And have you noticed any changes in in. The ability, in the way you connect with him?

P02 Yeah, I mean, I think.

Lily this week, watching him really enjoy the singing, because I think it's been a bit variable before, and that may be, you know, perhaps when I've chosen to sing to him, perhaps I was choosing to sing to him before more when he was upset, to try and soothe him, and I don't think that was really working, but because he was in such a good space this week, actually singing to him when he's happy and well, you know, he clearly really, really enjoys it. So definitely choosing my moments when I'm singing to him, perhaps not to soothe him, I don't think it works, but when he's in a good spot, as part of our enjoyment, our playtime together, yeah, it's clearly something that he likes. We were singing in the bath last night, weren't we?

R Ooh, nice. What was the song?

P02 I made it up. It was some random load of old rubbish.

R After from, you know, after the singing workshops, did you manage to include any new activities in your daily routine with them?

P02 Not singing.

R It could be singing or anything else.

P02 Yeah, so as I say, definitely singing for pleasure when he's in a good space. And as I say, making up songs together. So that's definitely something I'm doing more now. Is so like I, you know, we were singing about tummy time yesterday and then we were singing about bath time. So that's definitely new. Other than that... Yeah, I don't think so so much, but definitely making up songs together.

R And have you seen any changes in the way he responds to you during the singing?

P02 Well, as I say, just in clearly enjoying it more, unlike now. But yeah, he clearly enjoys it. And if, you know, if I like, if I sit him here and sing to him, he likes it. Don't you?

R Nice. Obviously, I'm trying to make a little comparison from the questions you guys answered before the workshops. To see if I, if there were any difference. And have you noticed any changes in your confidence in, not caring, but like responding to his needs after, his needs, God, after the workshop?

P02 Really difficult, because to be honest, because he's so little, my journey with him in this time, because like, how many weeks have we been doing it? Six? Yeah. Yeah, so he was five weeks when we started. So, like, we just didn't know each other at all. And he's my first baby, so I think I was just doing a lot of learning. So I suppose it's difficult to know how much is workshop-related versus how much is just, he's twice as old as he was when we started. I know him twice as well.

So, yeah, I mean, definitely my confidence has improved with him. Definitely I feel like I understand him more and his needs and how to help him. Difficult to sort of judge cause and effect, I suppose.

R No, no, no. Absolutely, absolutely. Let me see. We kind of touched on that, but this question was more about how you feel about singing and if the idea of singing and your idea of singing. God, I'm too early on this today. Sorry. I refresh, I will reset my brain. How has singing changed for you? How do you feel towards singing now? Is it improved?

P02 Yes, I. Think.

R Is. It the same?

P02 I think that one is more obvious as a cause and effect and definitely I feel more confident singing. You know, I'm not, I'm not a very good singer. And I've not done any sort of like choirs or anything else like that, I just like singing, I love karaoke, as I put in my sheet at the beginning, and yeah I'm definitely just singing to him more, including like singing to him in the streets, which I probably wouldn't have done before, and like making up songs and things like that, so definitely that has improved and I've enjoyed that a lot more, and that's definitely because of the workshops, 100%.

R Yeah, yeah, yeah, and Can you recall any aspects of the workshops that you've seen that had any impact on you as a mother or in the relationship? Anything else? Any other feedback?

P02 Well, I think actually some of the kind of exercises,

You know, just like the power of actually just doing a neck roll or some breathing, you forget, you know, and you're so consumed with sort of surviving this person. But actually, it does make you feel better to do some quite small, easy, quick things that just make you feel a bit kind of calmer and more connected to your own body. So yeah, that.

R Okay. And we kind of touched on this as well, but were there any challenges that you faced during the workshop?

P02 So yeah, I mean, I think Zoom is tricky. There's pros and cons, isn't there? I think I, I don't, I think it would have been nice at the beginning to do a bit more of an introduction of everybody. I think I didn't necessarily feel that connected to the other participants, and that might have been a nice thing to have at the beginning. And then obviously it's, you know, particularly when they're so little, I suppose, hospital appointments come up, you know, we went on holiday for that week as well, and there was no internet. And So I suppose just life can get in the way a little bit. And Zoom can help that for sure, I suppose, because it means you are more connectable.

R Yeah, no, no, no, absolutely. I felt like, you know, a couple of you were more like talkative and willing to share a little bit more. And some of the others just needed, wanted to hear, to listen. Yeah,

P02 Fair enough.

R It's understandable. And I know that Zoom could be a barrier and Yeah, so in a way being present forces you to relate to others and to talk to them and to share. And Zoom, yeah, does have these cons where basically, yeah, I'm here in the room, I'm with you in a moment, but I will hide behind the screen and just, yeah. So yeah, it has pros and cons, absolutely. Would you suggest these kind of workshops to other mothers?

P02 Yeah, I would. I would, I would, I think it's a nice, I think it's relatively easy to do because it's on Zoom, you know, and it's a nice space to just do something different with the day. I mean, I think I think everybody's slightly different with this stuff. I think I'm reaching the point now where we're going to be doing a little bit more with the day. And I think, I'm the sort of person, I'm quite happy on my own and I'm quite happy just me and him and I could probably do that for quite a long time just be me and him.

But I think it is a lonely time this early bit of motherhood and I think to just to have a space to connect with people. You know, is important for lots and lots of people. But also, I'm meeting up with a woman I've met tomorrow who we know through an antenatal class, but she doesn't want to go to the big group meetups. She doesn't like that.

So, you know, those sorts of things are not for everybody, whereas something like this, she might feel much more comfortable with because she can just, you know, come along, not turn on the camera, not sort of connect too much, but do something that sort of touches base with others. So, yeah, there is a space for it, for sure.

R Yeah, yeah, yeah. And last one, do you have anything else you want to add about this little experience that we had together?

P02 Oh, no, just thank you very much. Like, it's been a lovely thing to do and it's been something different in the week good way to, you know, practice my voice a bit more and learn some new songs and yeah it's been lovely.

R I'm glad, I'm glad. Fine, I have finished with the torture. And yeah, thank you for the time. Thank you for everything. I'm sure I will be in touch. I'm sure I will send new songs your way anyway. I will try to be in touch anyway. And if I do something similar again, I will try to reach out and see if you guys are available.

P02 What's the title of your MA brief?

R I should know this by heart, but let me... God. I feel like under exam. Um, so the title would be. Open the file. My T. The title would be Melodies of Motherhood, investigating the impact of singing on maternal well-being and the parent-infant relationship.

P02 Cool, lovely. Sounds very interesting.

Good luck. I hope the write-up goes well because it's a stressful time.

R Anyway, thank you so much.

Semi structured interview 2

P03

R Hi, can you hear me?

P03 Hi.

R Hi, how are you?

P03 Good, thank you. Sorry, I just don't normally join Zoom from my phone and I think I just needed to change my settings. I was like, why is it not letting me unmute myself?

R It's okay, it's okay, don't worry. I thought I did something wrong.

So how are you feeling? How have you been?

P03 Yeah okay just uh gosh lots of changes constantly um yeah.

R Which is I mean in a way it's good but sometimes when they're all together you're like ah yeah yeah.

P03 t's um it's just uh been it's been good but quite overwhelming it's especially now that you know they're active and can move and grab and grip.

R Oh my god you need to have like a hundred eyes and ears.

P03 Oh gosh.

Yeah yeah very close to us I mean previously we could just leave her somewhere safe but you know she could like she's able to kind of like try to pull herself up and so on so we can't leave her in a high crib or anywhere else yeah.

R Oh yeah my sister used to escape from the crib and you could find her everywhere like she was crazy crazy like a little monkey and even when she was like very tiny She could just, I don't know, she wasn't able to walk, could like climb the Crib and She could. The crib.

P03 Oh, Climb.

R My mom was going crazy at that period. She was very active and she would just be in a monkey all day. So I kind of know, I have an idea about that. Nice and okay I will so basically today I'm just going to ask a few questions which is basically about um.

It's basically a feedback from what we did. Yeah. I won't take too much of your time if you don't like a question, we'll just keep it. I mean, there's nothing personal, obviously. But if you feel like I'm.

Don't worry about it. So the first question would be how did you feel about the participation in the workshops? Was there a moment or anything that you particularly liked?

P03 I actually liked the choice of songs which surprised me quite a bit because I thought they might be more nursery rhymes-esque style. But I kind of preferred these as a song. I find the nursery rhymes to sometimes be a bit whiny. Or they're quite short, you know, you're trying to sing a song to your child, you'd like it to be a longer song. So I did actually like the choice of songs and songs that I wouldn't have normally considered. So that's been quite good. You know, the weeks where I've been able to participate, I've sort of tried to use those songs throughout the rest of the week as well to sing to her.

So that's been quite good. So, yes, I think not a particular moment per se, but the choice of songs. Yeah.

R Ok, I'm glad, I'm glad. I know with Zoom and everything, I wanted to do like something also a bit more like upbeat, but with the delay and the fact that we couldn't actually sing together was a bit difficult. Obviously, but I'm glad that you enjoyed the songs. Yeah, I tried to stay in the pop thing area of F. And some and try to pick songs that everyone might know but yeah from the beginning I was like no absolutely not nursery rhymes or like twinkle twinkle unless you know maybe something at the end yeah I did do something at the end but it wasn't the priority was for you to just forget about that for like 30 minutes so nice nice nice and has the inclusion of singing I know you used to sing before as well Has the inclusion of the singing in your daily life a little bit affected you in a way or you or you know the relationship with the baby as well? You?

P03 I think so. I mean, I was singing to her anyway, but as I said, this just added a different dimension, sort of not moving away from nursery rhymes, but just, you know, adding to our repertoire of songs that we had. So that was quite useful as well. As I said, I think that the biggest change is because the songs are longer, you know, I can sort of sing to her for a longer period of time as well. So I think in terms of like the quality and quantity of singing, you know, has sort of increased. So that's been quite good.

And obviously, you know, they do say, some research saying that, you know, children at the age of three, the differentiator is at home, you know, they've heard 30,000 more words than a child who has developmental disabilities. I can't remember the exact research or whatever. So yeah, I think

singing is a great way to get more words in throughout the day rather than just talking. And I know they say, you know, try to narrate, you know, chores or whatever you're doing around the baby.

But, you know, our singing is quite fun as well. And it's, it's different from speech because it's rhythmic, it's predictable, you know, certain songs that she hears on repeat, she smiles, she responds to it, so certainly, you know, there is a connection there with singing.

R Yeah, I think for them it's also even more interesting and, you know, it captures their attention and there are also some, the tune and, you know, your, you know, your, tone in your voice changes so for them. It's more interesting and they can kind of remember it as well.

P03 Yes.

R So absolutely absolutely right. Any songs that you particularly liked?

P03 Um, I think the, uh, the Loose and Loosen baby was quite nice. I think that might've been quite popular as well.

R Um,

P03 that, that was quite good. And, um, the, uh, Adele song that we did a couple of weeks ago as well. I wouldn't have thought of singing Adele to the baby, but that was quite good as well. Yeah.

R Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Me neither actually, but that, that song came to my mind in that, that morning. I had planned something else completely, but then I listened to it and um it was um Yes, it was about love, but you know, love is such a big word and it's not just love with your partner, it would be with your friends, with your baby in this case, with a sister or brother. So, I was like, ah, this might be interesting and I'm glad. And in general, for like your Your well-being in general, has singing affected you a little bit, like in your mood or anything?

P03 Yeah, I think for me, it does lift my mood. I mean, sometimes like I just, you know, sing randomly or sometimes like I'll be like, oh, I want to plan to sing the song. So I think generally, you know, that sort of lifted my mood anyway. And, you know, I think I had C sections. I wasn't able to carry a quite a lot initially, but now I can carry a dance around, sing as well, which is quite nice. So I think that's added that dimension to it. Yeah.

R Nice, nice and nice. And do you feel that also this like singing helps you, helps you. Helps you connect a little bit more with a baby? And have you seen also a bit of a response from her?

P03 Oh yeah, because you know, especially what I try to do is when I sing, I try to have her much closer to me so that she can see my mouth move and so on. And as I said, I can see that she's looking at my mouth. You know, so she knows something, something is coming out of it, like noise or whatever. And obviously with familiar tunes or phrases, you know, you can see, like, there's a change in their eyes or, as I said, she smiles. Especially when I start a song and she realizes, oh, you know, something familiar as well, especially at the start of a song. You know, she smiles. Also, like, if I'm trying to change her or, you know, if she's fidgeting or something, I start singing. I know sometimes that just calms her down. Not necessarily calms her down, but she pauses, whatever she's doing, so she's not so fidgety and I can maybe just, in that gap, do something, you know, free her arm or something. So, you know, you can sort of use a song to help her, you know, in that way as well.

R Yeah, nice. OK, OK, OK. I lost sight where I was going. In general, during these weeks, it doesn't have to be singing, but in your daily routine with her, did you... Incorporate any new activities or anything creative or not.

P03 Yeah, so I have, I've got a small backpack with lots of mini musical instruments like a xylophone and triangle. Obviously, it's for like 18 months plus, I only use it with her fully supervised, but you know, so trying to, we've been sort of just messing about with it, but recently we've just been trying to play a tune or like maybe try to like just sound out some words or just, you know, some sort of gibberish, but try to not just play the instruments, but try to make up a tune or just add some noises with our mouths.

Yeah.

R Nice, nice, nice, nice. And we already touched on this because my next question was going to be, yeah, your daily routine and if you sang a bit more to the beat, but I feel like that was a yes. And in general have you noticed any changes in your confidence in caring for her after the workshops?

P03 Yeah I think so because I think for me personally, like I do sort of, because she's still quite young, you know, despite the fact she's, she has recently been able to like, you know, be a bit more mobile, you know, for a long period of time, all they really rely on is you talking, you know, like, even when they try to turn their heads when they're very young, they do it because of your voice, they can hear something, they're very sensitive to it. You know, and she can, she's picking up. So I think, you know, voice and stuff like that's really, you know, she's, that's the kind of the earliest stuff that she's picking up on.

And I think by participating in this workshop, I was singing to her anyway, but I think it's just made me more, sing to her more frequently as well, as I said, just, and also just a wider range of songs rather than the same sort of songs again and again, yeah. So I feel happy about that actually. I don't think I would have done that if I hadn't participated in the workshop.

R Nice, nice, nice. And I think we already mentioned this, like your thoughts about the bond with your baby after the workshops, if there was any changes or it was the same or I don't know. If you.

P03 You know, I think I'm just always looking out for tasks that would bring us close together, you know, anything that would help develop mentally. So I do think it certainly helped. Yeah.

R Nice. Let me see, let me see. And this is mainly a question. For you, any aspects of the workshop that had an impact on yourself as a woman and also as a mother as well? Any feedback?

P03 I think it was quite, it's quite different sort of workshop so that was quite nice to do. I think I've been quite particular about taking her to places per se, like physical places. I think a lot of the times, for example, there might be like mummy yoga, but I've not been comfortable putting her on the floor and leaving her there whilst I'm doing yoga in front of her, I don't know, for hygiene reasons or whatever. Whereas I felt like with this particular workshop, because it's from home and, you know, there wasn't much interaction per se with other mums, but it was nice to see them, you know, other people and their babies as well.

So that was quite nice. And it was also quite convenient to do. I said, otherwise, you know, I would like to participate in more workshops online, as opposed to like physical workshops. And this was quite good for me in that sense, in terms of like mental wellbeing and all of that actually, yeah.

R Nice, nice, nice, nice. Any challenges that you might have faced because of during the workshops, I don't know, the Zoom or anything.

P03 No, technically it was fine. The only the only issue was obviously not being able to attend all the sessions in a couple of weeks. I think she was teething for a while a few weeks ago, so she was a bit unsettled. So it was a bit difficult to try and, you know, settle and try to participate on those particular days when it was a bit unpredictable. That was the only thing really, not being able to participate, you know, each week for the full sessions.

R Nice. And would you consider to suggest those kind of workshops to other mothers?

P03 Oh, definitely. Yes, absolutely. Yeah.

R Nice, nice, nice. I think I'm almost done. Let me just go down a bit so I can let you go. Oh yes, basically the last one. Any thoughts at all, any feedback that you can give me, if you have anything else to add that you want to share.

P03 Particularly, I think this is not necessarily an improvement, but perhaps if this workshop was to run again, perhaps maybe at the start of the workshop, just maybe send out a list of songs that would be used in the workshop. It just means that I would have maybe preferred to listen to any unfamiliar songs before the workshop rather than learn it for the first time during the workshop. It. Just means you can just.

R Fine.

P03 Get into it. But that's that's just, that's just mean, yeah.

R No, no, no. Absolutely, absolutely. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Absolutely useful. OK. I think I tortured you for... Enough time.

P03 No, no, it's fine.

R Yeah, I'm glad. You know, it's always nice to hear feedback and it's always good. Because you can always improve for the next time. So yeah, absolutely. Thank you for your time and for participating. I will try to be in touch if I do something else, something similar. I will try to be in touch and then try to make a bit more, so the feedback that I got also from the others, but I couldn't push it too much. I wanted you to also to bond, you know, between the four of you, but sometimes it was difficult.

Sometimes, you know, with the Zoom and everything, it's not always, easy to do that because you have, you know, a scream, a scream, a scream in front of you. So if I manage to do it another time, I will try to do that as well. Because, you know, it's nice to have, to get to know people who are the same kind of face as you and you get to share experiences. Anyway, thank you so much.

P03 No problem.

R And I hope you have a good day.

P03 You too. Thanks. Bye bye.

APPENDIX 13: SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW 1 CODING

Descriptive coding						
Maternal wellbeing	Correlation between bond and maternal wellbeing	Singing for maternal wellbeing	Singing for bond with baby	Challenges for mothers	Further research	Impact on the child
Vital to be able to take care of another being-related to the development of child	Any disturbances will affect the bond Mother not available Will not identify and respond to the needs of the baby No connection Baby will learn mother not available	Creative tasks will support daily tasks Remind moms of their own needs, creativity Singing provides benefits on every aspects(mood, physical etc.) Survival of the soul Singing in group	If you sound to the child they sound back to you Instinctive communication Baby understand and feels the mother's joy meeting the needs of the mothers is good for bond Connection, eye contact	I can't sing Lead group safely Inequalities for mothers	Analyse effectiveness of treatment Feasibility Evidence based proof	
Maternal wellbeing is critical		Singing can help in stressful times of the day and can be used in	Singing together :bond To get through daily tasks	I can't singing-afraid of not being a good singer stops	Evidence based research on what is happening	

		different ways- makes job easier Singing is in our culture Music and singing :community, which is lost		from going to workshops- Barriers are paediatricians who do not encourage creative activities. Doesn't matter the singing voice- "their voice is their child favourite radio" Mothers need to understand how much singing can impact them and baby	the either the baby and mothers system- reduction of cortisol- hormonal response Traumas – how their can impact you as child when parent	
Psycho emotional wellbeing of mothers is crucial- Helping mothers to pause and experiment with imagination and creativity supports maternal wellbeing and parenting couple	Maternal emotional wellbeing is necessary condition for development of the relationship and emotional bond between mother and child and begin early during pregnancy- Lullabies help calming the baby- enhance relationship and communication, even during pregnancy , mutual affection consolidated Singing before, during labour and after, supports the first meeting with baby,	Use of singing during pregnancy supports on physical and psychological level- awareness of communicative potential of one's own voice- experimentation of communicative modes to children Singing workshops are important because allow the sharing with other women, in preparation with other mums,	"Chosen lullaby is the leitmotiv of cuddle moments with their baby, during and also after birth"	Stopping is the challenge, moving too fast Is important to disconnect and be guided by voice and imagination	Attention to integrate this tool in the midwife field	
Mental and physical illness are interrelated – Mental well- being of the mother is important for	Post-natal depression can impact daily tasks like caregiving which is crucial to develop	Music not strictly therapeutic space but mothers feel good Singing gives sense of structure, enables to talk about		This intervention is not for everyone- some woman don't want to think about their struggle	Social prescribing Founding Evidence informed practice Hormone response to	Although not very evidence based, depression impact child emotional, physical,

psychological and physical, especially recovering after pregnancy Postnatal depression impact day to day tasks	connection with baby Singing in group helps connecting with baby Babies respond to parent infant voice, mirrors the vocal intonation: connection and closeness, bond Helps the baby to develop	things which may be difficult, safe environment It gives mothers time for themselves It helps build creative expression and support mothers well being Singing and working in group is crucial: sense of accomplishment, connectedness Sharing experiences Sense of belonging and involvement Mothers need to bring their music, culture ,sense of ownership, belonging is important for effectiveness, Important to let moms lead		It's not every one and can be an isolating experience Difficulty in getting to the workshops Scheduling, transportation Pay the session can be hard I can't sing We need to normalize the fact that the baby is not always calm Stigma of perfection, normalize that is ok if you do not immediately not love the baby,, sleep deprivation, etc	make sure that there are benefits Open to other parents, grandfathers, fathers etc.	development. Being depressed doesn't mean you will hurt the child. Do not scare the mothers Recognise the impact and how scary can be for the parents
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Semi structured interview 1

Pattern coding	Thematic analysis
Maternal wellbeing is vital for taking care of another being- it impact child development	Maternal wellbeing
Mental and physical illness are interrelated- mental wellbeing is crucial for recovering after birth	
Mental wellbeing impacts daily tasks	
Mother not available will result in no connection with baby, problems with development of the child, impact daily tasks (postnatal depression)	Maternal wellbeing is strictly correlated to development and bond of child
Baby will learn that mother is not available	
Babies understand how the mother is feeling	
Singing is a support for daily tasks	The many benefits of singing
Singing helps mothers find themselves again(me time)	
Singing gives mothers a sense of belonging, involvement, structure, ownership, accomplishment, connectedness, sharing, support	
Singing has psychological, physical, benefits	
Singing is a communicative vehicle for mother and baby-enhancing connection	Bond
Mothers think they cannot sing	Challenges related to creative interventions
Normalize that the baby is not always calm/that the bond doesn't happen straight away	
Feasibility, transport, location may stop mothers from getting to the workshops	
Singing interventions are not for everyone-may be isolating moment	
Lack of evidence based program to help mothers understanding how beneficial singing is	
Evidence based research-hormonal response	Evidence needed to integrate singing in care settings etc.
Social prescribing	
Integrate intervention in care settings-midwives	
Depression doesn't mean hurting the baby	Raise awareness-learn how to talk to mothers in vulnerable moments

APPENDIX 14: OPEN ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE CODING

In Vivo coding	Emotion coding	Comments
<i>"I feel confident, but often feel as though I am not doing enough to be the best Mum I can be"</i> Confident, not enough	Feeling confident-confidence Feeling of inadequacy	Feeling confident, but sometimes not feel enough to meet the needs of the baby
<i>I often feel tired and feel as though I may be not meeting all his needs, and sometimes could do more energetic activities!</i> Could do more energetic activities	Feeling of inadequacy Frustration ,sadness, fatigue	
<i>I feel as though I know exactly what my baby wants and needs and can always pinpoint this. I feel as though I know him well and when he needs something or feels upset</i>	Feeling confidence/ adequacy	Recognises the baby's needs and mood. Before she was a little scared
<i>This surprised me as when I was pregnant, I was scared that maybe I would not know what to do</i>	Fear of not knowing what to do/confident Surprised about abilities	
<i>I try to look after myself and give myself a peaceful and happy environment and this will rub off on my baby</i> Look after myself- peaceful environment	Self-care, contentment,	Looks after herself, which is connected to the baby mood and development. Time with baby. Including the baby in her activities
<i>I try to include my baby in all my activities</i> Provide new activities	Inclusiveness, eagerness	
<i>I love engaging with my bubba</i> Joy looking after baby, Concern about handling a second child	Love, affection, joy	Positive engagement-bond
<i>I try to include things for me in my routine,</i>		Trying to keep up with schedule and chores.

<i>when I sometimes get overwhelmed. I struggle to fit my own wellbeing into the day but sometimes I find this hard or sometimes hard to motivate myself.</i> Struggle to fit own well-being, overwhelmed Hard to motivate	Feeling overwhelmed Lack of motivation Struggle	Not always able to take care of her wellbeing. Support?
<i>I love singing</i>	Love	
<i>I just love music and the way it makes me feel as songs and music just make me feel calm. I try to sing a lot to my baby</i> Music makes me calm, singing to baby, nursery rhymes, desire to include singing	Love for singing and music Enjoyment, affection aspiration	Singing and music part of the day- singing makes her feel calm
<i>Learning to understand him(4 months old). At times can feel like I don't know what he needs or how to help him when he is upset</i> <i>Sometimes very rewarding, sometimes very overwhelming</i>	Inadequacy Feeling sometimes confident Sometimes feeling unsure Uncertainty Rewarding and overwhelming, mixed emotions	Sometimes difficulties in recognising baby's needs or helping when upset/disrupted Understanding and responding to baby needs can be rewarding or overwhelming- motherhood Support of partner, keeping informed
<i>Mostly positive, enjoyable. At times I feel I have energy and creativity</i>	Happiness, feeling confident	Positive interaction with baby
<i>It is mostly sleeping and feeding but when he is awake I try to... to him, read with him, sing to him</i> Mostly positive interactions, feeling energy and creativity at times Focus on sleeping, feeding, interacting and singing	Empowered, seeking support, Positive interactions, occasional doubt and lack of creativity Routine based-home centred, effortful engagement	Daily routine dedicated to the child. Singing
<i>We found a song with his name in it, sing that to him. I sing pop songs using lyrics ---on Spotify. Also make up songs keep me sane when he is upset.</i> <i>(bit karaoke from before motherhood) I really enjoy singing</i> Enjoyment in singing, finding comfort and sanity in singing	Love for singing Integrating singing, enjoyment, comfort, coping mechanism, sanity	Singing part of daily routine

<i>I am feeling fairly confident and as I gain more skills and experience, I am better at adapting to my baby's needs</i> Feeling confident, skills and experience adaptation	Feeling confident, improvement in adaptation skills	Getting more and more confident Adapt to baby's needs
<i>I have learnt to look for cues – hunger, sleep, play ,excitement. I respond accordingly</i> <i>For example, when my baby is tired, singing in a soft and gently voice helps put her to sleep. We have a piano at home and my baby likes to bash at the keys and gets excited.</i> Cues interpretation: hunger, sleep, excitement, soft signing aid sleeping, encouraging baby's' interaction with piano	Feeling confident, learning cues, responsiveness, encouragement, engaging activities to match baby's interests and emotional cues	Singing help in everyday tasks and calm baby
<i>I try to remain positive and learn from observing my baby. I use a mix of baby led and self-led activities to create a developmental nurturing environment</i> Positivity, learning from baby's observation, mix of baby led and self-led activities	Feeling confident Positivity, learning from observation, mix of activity to foster developmental growth	Learning by observing the baby-let the baby discover by himself
<i>I'm generally a positive person and understand that babies need a lot of support and interaction</i>	Feeling confident	
<i>I ensure we dance, sing (especially now that my baby had discovered her lungs and responding with sound to me speaking) and involve her in most of my activities. She responds by laughing a cooing.</i> Positive attitude, support, interaction, positive baby response	Love- positive engagement, involvement in various activities like singing, dancing, satisfactions in baby's response and joy	Positive engagement- mother available for baby-creative interactions help. Baby responds to mother-bond Daily tasks- did not mention about mum time
<i>Yes, we are both happy when I sing to my baby. She is able to recognise a lot of simple songs and it helps sooth her when she cries or needs comfort.</i> Singing present in daily routine, singing contributes to baby's	Mutual Happiness, regular singing Singing as soothing mechanism for the baby	Singing part of the daily routine-support when baby is disrupted

recognition of songs: brings comfort to baby		
<i>It is challenging but rewarding</i>	Love	Aspects of taking care of a baby
<i>I generally know what's going on physiologically and psychologically</i>	Feeling confident	Connection-mother available, recognises baby's needs
<i>Mental health has been a challenge and support from my husband is key As well as exercise and pursuing creative endeavours</i>	Feeling challenged	Mental health is a challenge Importance of husband support Creative tasks help
<i>I am easily distracted. I do best when taking him to outside activities, so that there's a frame and I am forced to focus</i>	Feeling not always adequate	Interactions with bay-mother distracted-best outside to focus on him
<i>I sing while I cook. I put music on to time cooking.</i>	Love for music	Singing is part of the routine Tight daily routine- doesn't mention "me time"

APPENDIX 15: SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW 2 CODING

In Vivo coding		Emotion coding	Comments
<i>"it just reminded me like, oh, you know, I do like music and I can play instruments."</i> Music reminder	Feeling good Sense of identity,	<i>I used to do like obviously choir and all those kind of stuff</i> <i>"It was nice to be part, do something singing-ish again."</i>	contentment
<i>Because when you have a baby, you're, in a weird way, you don't, you lose who you are. You just become mum. And then when people talk to you, they'll go, how's baby? They don't ask how you are</i> Emotional challenges of becoming a mum- loss of identity	Feeling not like herself Baby is a priority frustration	<i>"It's a shame more people didn't take part really because it was really good."</i>	frustration
<i>it made me remember kind of to not get caught up in these nursery rhymes</i> music reminder	Feeling the need of prioritising oneself		
<i>"I'm still, you know, dragging along"</i> Parental reflection			
<i>so this is you know but also I felt it was more for the my bump as well because obviously I forget I'm pregnant sometimes I completely forget until she kicks or until I nearly wet myself or because you do, you forget, because I'm so busy with him</i>	Feeling connected to the baby thanks to music Struggle Feeling like there is no space for oneself		
<i>"music does calm me... Because they need to listen to stuff other than nursery rhymes, they really do. For my sanity."</i>	Music as therapy	<i>"It was something else. So just keep on doing it."</i>	overwhelmed

<i>I ended up getting the ukulele out from its dusty cupboard and trying to engage him in that way. And he really enjoys it. As soon as he sees me getting it, he runs over. You know, and I think without this, I wouldn't have got it out of the cupboard. It would have just sat there and it probably would have been like another year before I thought, oh yeah, I can play that. You know, so, so it has that, that kind of sparked that to kind of get, because I do want him to be into music. I think it's really important for kids</i>	Finding the motivation for something she enjoys Empowerment, motivation feeling like myself again- if I feel good my baby feels good love		
<i>"It's made me kind of change my routine a bit because I realized I miss my music."</i>	Routine modification	<i>I've always wished there was something where it's like a mother and baby choir."</i>	yearning
. <i>"I have a lot of nervous energy, which causes anxiety for me."</i>	Stress relief	<i>"I got excited for it, you know, because I was like, oh my God, you know, something to do."</i>	excitement
<i>"It was nice to kind of just, even if I wasn't holding him, to hold my bump and just remember that there is another one on the way."</i>	Connection with unborn baby	<i>"Because they need to listen to stuff other than nursery rhymes, they really do. For my sanity."</i>	anxiousness
<i>But the more I'm doing more music with him, he started to do more babbling because normally the noises he makes, he'll either grunt at me or he'll just go like that kind of noise. He's actually in.</i> <i>The last week or two, once I've been doing the more music, he's been kind of</i>	Communication enhancement		

going, which is really good. I mean, he started to say mama as well, which is good. So I'm hoping that because I'm putting more effort into that one on one, It's helping him watch me, because I do a lot with him. We go out every day, we do swings, we do the park, we do stories, we do toys. But there's something different about music, isn't there? Because it's one-on-one. So I've been doing that a lot more, and I've noticed the last few days as well, he's been babbling more			
		"He's my first, and when you do become a new mum, it's really overwhelming. You think you're prepared, and you're not."	joy
"Because when you do become a new mum, it's really overwhelming. You think you're prepared, and you're not. You know, you know, I've spent years being tired. The tiredness doesn't bother me. It's more, it's the thing which affected me the most was I wasn't me anymore for a long time."	Re-establishing identity	"But, you know, just keep on doing it. It does help because there are some women out there that wouldn't, wouldn't feel like, wouldn't be able to do it without help."	hopefulness
. But I have noticed that, you know, I have been making sure I've been putting that time aside. Right, it's music time now, you know, and I wouldn't have done that before, I don't think, you know, and as well, because I've been using the high chair a lot	Feeling the need and importance of finding time for what she likes and for herself Empowerment Self-worth	"Because when you do become a new mum, it's really overwhelming."	concern

more in the kitchen, because I really hate high chairs. I find them really annoying because half the food, you know, I've got a lot to do anyway, let alone clean.			
after doing the singing and stuff and remembering all the songs I liked, I was like, right, I'm going to go in the kitchen now and he's coming with me whether he likes it or not. You know, and it's actually made me use the high chair a lot more, put my music on, singing away to him in the kitchen while he's eating his little snacks, rather than him just eating in the lounge here with me. So that has made me kind of change my routine a bit because I realised I miss my music.	Feeling the protagonist again Empowerment identity	The tiredness doesn't bother me. It's more, it's the thing which affected me the most was I wasn't me anymore for a long time."	relief
music was a really big part of my life before becoming a mum. It really was. I would have my earphones in all day, going out and about. Don't do that anymore, because I can't, because I want to hear him. You know, I'd have music on in the kitchen, music on in the bath. I don't do that anymore. So it has kind of made me think, right, you know, I've got to bring myself back a bit here, because music does calm me. I have a lot of nervous energy, which causes anxiety for me, because obviously I've got a lot going on	Prioritising her wellbeing Feeling the need of being herself again		

<i>"I've always said I'd love there to be like a choir where it's, it's like a mother and baby choir."</i>	Yearning for community involvement		
<i>helped me to think, right, you know, just, you know, I'm allowed to have my music. He doesn't have to have his all the time, you know?</i>	Feeling in charge again, Prioritise herself again Feeling allowed to have time for herself Feeling important and worth		
<i>"Oh my God, you know, something to do, something to do that's not, you know, that's not going to the toddler group or that's not going to the library to do, you know, it was something else."</i>	Appreciation for self-discovery		
<i>and when you do become a new mum, it's really overwhelming. You think you're prepared, and you're not. You know, you know, i've spent years being tired. The tiredness doesn't bother me. It's more, it's the thing which affected me the most was I wasn't me anymore for a long time, because you've got a baby and obviously don't get me wrong, he's the most important thing in my life, but if I'm not me, how can I make him him?</i>	Feeling overwhelmed Feeling not prepared as first mum Not feeling like myself How can I educate him if I am not myself		
<i>It does help because there are some women out there that wouldn't, wouldn't feel like, wouldn't be able to do it without help, wouldn't be able to turn themselves back into them without help.</i>	Woman are afraid to look for help- go to class Stigma Not feeling important		

<i>"Really enjoyed them... sometimes felt like a challenge to fit in... but once in the perfect place, he really enjoyed the session."</i>	Benefits and challenges of participating in the singing workshops	<i>"Definitely included that more in our routine."</i>	Satisfaction
<i>"Delay is too difficult to really sing together... But the benefits are that you can mute yourself if you're having struggles."</i>	" Pros and cons of zoom workshops for singing	<i>Definitely generally been therapeutic... something quite magical about singing... enjoyed that a lot more."</i>	enjoyment
<i>"Naturally singing to him quite a lot... and it's given me more songs... definitely included that more in our routine."</i>	Increased incorporation of singing in daily routine	<i>"Definitely enjoying it more... clearly enjoys it... really enjoy it."</i>	Joy Observing changes in baby's response and enjoyment during singing
<i>"Loosen Loosen Baby, I really liked that... and then we've done quite a lot of Adele this week."</i>	Specific songs enjoyed and incorporated into routine	<i>"Definitely choosing my moments... when he's in a good spot, he clearly really, really enjoys it."</i>	adaptability
		<i>"Making up songs together... singing about tummy time yesterday."</i>	creativity
		<i>"Definitely feel more confident singing... enjoyed that a lot more."</i>	Confidence
<i>"Singing for pleasure when he's in a good space... making up songs together... singing about tummy time yesterday."</i>		<i>"Makes you feel better... a bit calmer and more connected."</i>	relaxation"
<i>"Definitely feel more confident singing... singing to him more... definitely"</i>	Increase in confidence related to singing and engaging with the baby	<i>"Zoom is tricky... hospital appointments and life getting in the way."</i>	frustration

<i>improved... enjoyed that a lot more."</i>			
<i>"Yeah, I would... relatively easy to do... a lonely time this early bit of motherhood... to have a space to connect with people."</i>	Consideration of workshop recommendation for other mothers	"Lonely time this early bit of motherhood... to have a space to connect with people." connection	
<i>"Thank you very much... been a lovely thing to do... practice my voice a bit more and learn some new songs... been lovely."</i>	Closing gratitude and reflection on the workshop experience	<i>"Been a lovely thing to do... practice my voice a bit more and learn some new songs... been lovely."</i>	gratitude
		. <i>It was really nice to sort of carve out a bit of space to do something like that because I think otherwise the day can just fall into a run of, you know, feed, change, sleep, repeat.</i> Feeling caught up-not free	
		<i>So I think sometimes it felt like a challenge to fit it in because, you know, if he's not in the right bit of that cycle that can be that can be tricky um but actually once if if we were in the right place like this week particularly he was in the perfect place he'd just woken up he'd just been fed he was really happy and he really enjoyed the session which meant that I could more enjoy the session because he was um yeah.</i> <i>You know, the reason I did it is because I found that I was naturally singing to him quite a lot. I think</i>	Feeling the need to find herself again and time for herself Impossible to enjoy something unless the baby is in the right place Singing included in daily routine- feeling connected to the baby

		<i>that's only made it more, and it's also given me more songs, so I've definitely sung the songs after the sessions. Yeah, so it's definitely included that more in our routine, for sure.</i>	
		<i>It's so difficult to say, Bru, because we're so early days, like everything is just changing so much all the time anyway, so I think it's very difficult to honestly say anything particularly related to that, but definitely generally singing is helpful, you know, like it just shifts something, there is something quite magical about singing that does just you know, feel so good that I'm sure it's generally been therapeutic in what is an incredibly difficult time of my life, you know, like a very big shift has happened.</i>	Feeling like singing helps during challenging times- not sure if it's strictly related to workshops
		<i>watching him really enjoy the singing, because I think it's been a bit variable before, and that may be, you know, perhaps when I've chosen to sing to him, perhaps I was choosing to sing to him before more when he was upset, to try and soothe him, and I don't think that was really working, but because he was in such a good space this week, actually singing to him when he's happy and well, you know, he clearly really, really enjoys it. So definitely choosing my moments when I'm singing to him, perhaps not to soothe him, I don't think it works, but when he's in a good spot, as part of our</i>	Confidence in recognising baby's' needs emotions, connection with baby

		<i>enjoyment, our playtime together, yeah, it's clearly something that he likes.</i>	
		<i>I say, definitely singing for pleasure when he's in a good space. And as I say, making up songs together. So that's definitely something I'm doing more now</i>	Feeling connected-recognising baby's emotions
		<i>so he was five weeks when we started. So, like, we just didn't know each other at all. And he's my first baby, so I think I was just doing a lot of learning. So I suppose it's difficult to know how much is workshop-related versus how much is just, he's twice as old as he was when we started. I know him twice as well.</i>	Connected with the baby
		<i>yeah, I mean, definitely my confidence has improved with him. Definitely I feel like I understand him more and his needs and how to help him. Difficult to sort of judge cause and effect, I suppose</i>	feeling more confident- not sure how much is related to workshops due to short times
		<i>I think that one is more obvious as a cause and effect and definitely I feel more confident singing. You know, I'm not, I'm not a very good singer. And I've not done any sort of like choirs or anything else like that, I just like singing,</i>	Feeling more confident in singing- feeling connected through singing
		<i>as I put in my sheet at the beginning, and yeah I'm definitely just singing to him more, including like singing to him in the</i>	

		<i>streets, which I probably wouldn't have done before, and like making up songs and things like that, so definitely that has improved and I've enjoyed that a lot more,</i>	
		<i>, just like the power of actually just doing a neck roll or some breathing, you forget, you know, and you're so consumed with sort of surviving this person. But actually, it does make you feel better to do some quite small, easy, quick things that just make you feel a bit kind of calmer and more connected to your own body.</i>	Feeling more connected with herself, mentally and physically Feeling the need to take care of herself- feeling important, protagonist
		<i>I think it would have been nice at the beginning to do a bit more of an introduction of everybody. I think I didn't necessarily feel that connected to the other participants, and that might have been a nice thing to have at the beginning</i>	Feeling the need to connect with others
		<i>I think it's relatively easy to do because it's on Zoom, you know, and it's a nice space to just do something different with the day</i>	Feeling the need of doing something else- finding herself again
		<i>I'm quite happy on my own and I'm quite happy just me and him and I could probably do that for quite a long time just be me and him</i>	Feeling happy with baby- connection
		<i>I'm meeting up with a woman I've met tomorrow who we know through an</i>	Feeling the need to connect with others – lonely time

		<i>antenatal class, but she doesn't want to go to the big group meetups. She doesn't like that</i>	
		<i>those sorts of things are not for everybody, whereas something like this, she might feel much more comfortable with because she can just, you know, come along, not turn on the camera, not sort of connect too much, but do something that sort of touches base with others. So, yeah, there is a space for it, for sure</i>	online classes are more comfortable
		<i>it's just uh been it's been good but quite overwhelming it's especially now that you know they're active and can move and grab and grip.</i>	Need to 100 % attention on the baby overwhelmed
		<i>I actually liked the choice of songs which surprised me quite a bit because I thought they might be more nursery rhymes-esque style. But I kind of preferred these as a song. I find the nursery rhymes to sometimes be a bit whiny. So I did actually like the choice of songs and songs that I wouldn't have normally considered. So that's been quite good. You know, the weeks where I've been able to participate, I've sort of tried to use those songs throughout the rest of the week as well to sing to her.</i>	Not happy with nursery rhymes, confidence to sing every genre to the baby
		<i>I was singing to her anyway, but as I said, this</i>	Feeling little difference, but

		<i>just added a different dimension, sort of not moving away from nursery rhymes, but just, you know, adding to our repertoire of songs that we had. So that was quite useful as well. As I said, I think that the biggest change is because the songs are longer, you know, I can sort of sing to her for a longer period of time as well. So I think in terms of like the quality and quantity of singing, you know, has sort of increased. So that's been quite good.</i>	definitely signing more –feeling more confident
		<i>our singing is quite fun as well. And it's, it's different from speech because it's rhythmic, it's predictable, you know, certain songs that she hears on repeat, she smiles, she responds to it, so certainly, you know, there is a connection there with singing.</i>	Feeling more connected with the baby thanks to singing
		<i>Yeah, I think for me, it does lift my mood. that sort of lifted my mood anyway. And, you know, I think I had C sections. I wasn't able to carry a quite a lot initially, but now I can carry a dance around, sing as well, which is quite nice. So I think that's added that dimension to it. Yeah.</i>	Feeling better – mood lifted due to singing Feeling not like herself, more confidence
		<i>I try to have her much closer to me so that she can see my mouth move and so on. And as I said, I can see that she's looking</i>	Feeling connected to baby- singing directed infant-id

		<i>at my mouth. You know, so she knows something, something is coming out of it, like noise or whatever. And obviously with familiar tunes or phrases, you know, you can see, like, there's a change in their eyes or, as I said, she smiles.</i>	
		<i>Also, like, if I'm trying to change her or, you know, if she's fidgeting or something, I start singing. I know sometimes that just calms her down. Not necessarily calms her down, but she pauses, whatever she's doing, so she's not so fidgety and I can maybe just, in that gap, do something, you know, free her arm or something. So, you know, you can sort of use a song to help her, you know, in that way as well.</i>	Feeling confidence in connecting and creating nurturing time with baby
		<i>but recently we've just been trying to play a tune or like maybe try to like just sound out some words or just, you know, some sort of gibberish, but try to not just play the instruments, but try to make up a tune or just add some noises with our mouths.</i>	Feeling more confident-educate baby
		<i>I think so because I think for me personally, like I do sort of, because she's still quite young, you know, despite the fact she's, she has recently been able to like, you know, be a bit more mobile, you know, for a long period of time, all they really rely on is you talking, you know, like,</i>	Feeling more confident understanding baby feelings and needs and satisfying baby

		<i>even when they try to turn their heads when they're very young, they do it because of your voice, they can hear something, they're very sensitive to it. You know, and she can, she's picking up. So I think, you know, voice and stuff like that's really, you know, she's, that's the kind of the earliest stuff that she's picking up on.</i>	
		<i>but I think it's just made me more, sing to her more frequently as well, as I said, just, and also just a wider range of songs rather than the same sort of songs again and again, yeah. So I feel happy about that actually. I don't think I would have done that if I hadn't participated in the workshop</i>	Feeling more confident – feeling happier
		<i>You know, I think I'm just always looking out for tasks that would bring us close together, you know, anything that would help develop mentally. So I do think it certainly helped. Yeah.</i>	Feeling the need to connect with baby-singing helped
		<i>Whereas I felt like with this particular workshop, because it's from home and, you know, there wasn't much interaction per se with other mums, but it was nice to see them, you know, other people and their babies as well</i>	Feeling less alone-connected with others
		<i>. And this was quite good for me in that sense, in</i>	Feeling better-wellbeing

		<i>terms of like mental wellbeing and all of that</i>	
		<i>. So it was a bit difficult to try and, you know, settle and try to participate on those particular days when it was a bit unpredictable. That was the only thing really, not being able to participate, you know, each week for the full sessions.</i>	

